

SIR RICHARD TANGYE

STUART REID

To

Goldwin Smith, D. C. L.

With the

respect & esteem
of

Smart-Reid.

Blackwell Cliff -

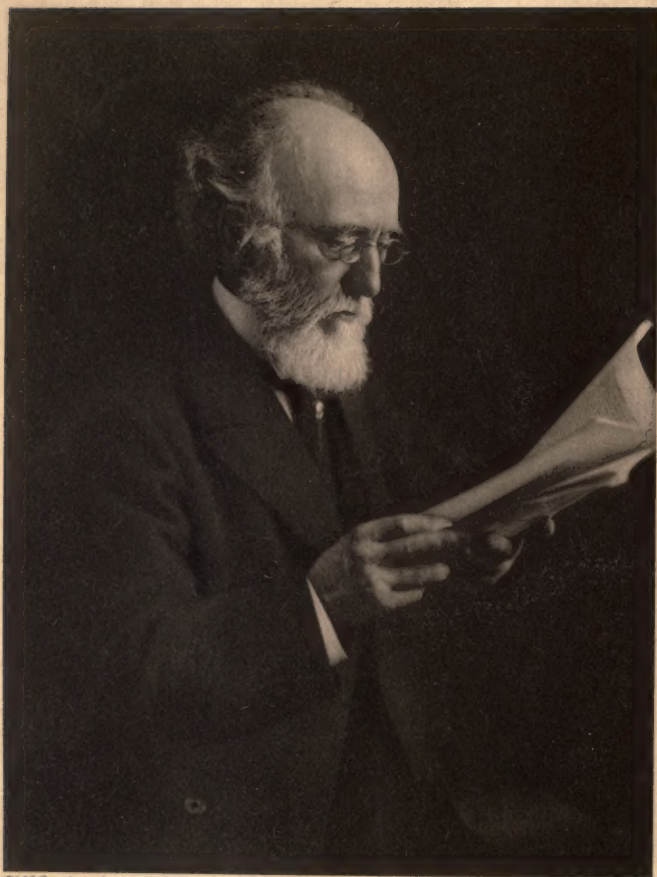
East-Grinstead.

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June 19, 1909.

SIR RICHARD
TANGYE

THE RIGHT
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SIR RICHARD TANGYE

BY

STUART J. REID

D.C.L.

AUTHOR OF "LIFE AND TIMES OF SYDNEY SMITH"
"LIFE AND LETTERS OF LORD DURHAM," ETC.


"He loved the truth which reconciled
The strong man, Reason ; Faith the child,
In him belief and act were one,
The homily of duty done."

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TO
LADY TANGYE

THE DEVOTED WIFE OF ONE OF THE
MOST CHIVALROUS MEN WHOM
THE WRITER EVER KNEW
THIS APPRECIATION
IS DEDICATED

PREFACE

I HAVE written this book in order to show, as far as in me lies, what manner of man was Sir Richard Tangye. I have done so in order that those who come after may know, to such extent as is still possible, the qualities even more than the achievements which explain the wide appeal of his character. The book is written of set purpose simply, for simplicity, in the most worthy acceptance of the term, was the most conspicuous trait in his nature. He was transparently open and artless. But simplicity in itself does not carry one far in the interpretation of such a man, so to it, I add other qualities to the great endowment of a sunny, unspoilt temperament the possession, to a rare degree, of courage, sympathy, and common sense. His moral courage stood revealed at every crisis of his public and private life. His sympathy, it was at once delicate and practical, ran like a golden thread through all his intercourse with other people. His common

sense leaped forth, even in casual talk, as well as dominated all the activities of a strenuous career.

The aim of this book is to describe the man exactly as I knew him in the genial leisure of his closing years. We came to know each other almost by chance ; but we quickly found that we had many common interests, and mere acquaintance ripened swiftly into a friendship, close and confidential, which deepened into tenderness in the last anxious months before the end. I have known many men of all ranks and conditions, but I never met any one who possessed a more exquisite genius for friendship. He was not a man who wore his heart upon his sleeve. On the contrary, in spite of his affluent talk, his intensely human temperament, and his power—it was a quite unconscious gift—of drawing the best out of every one who met him frankly in hearty speech, he was shy. All who knew him recognised more or less vividly the qualities on which I have just laid stress. But exceedingly few people, for at the heart of him he was reserved—suspected the depths and heights of a nature which was so finely poised that self-revelation was difficult. In many close talks at Glendorgal, in the Nursing Home in London, after his last critical operation,

and in the final months of his life at Combe Bank, when it was only too clear to us both that recovery was impossible—that knowledge was not denied me, or this book would never have been written.

Few things impressed me more than his unfailing vivacity and the almost boyish delight which he took in doing little acts of kindness. One instance of the latter, slight though it is, may perhaps be mentioned. He was my guest in the last year of his life. I had shown him a number of small treasures I prized—medals, autograph letters, political and literary, Civil War Tracts, various books in which former owners had written their names, notably, Oliver Goldsmith and Napoleon Bonaparte; an armchair which once belonged to Sydney Smith, a quaint mirror which was the property of Charlotte Brontë at Haworth, and other decorative spoil of a bookish man. But, to my amusement, the thing which seemed to attract him most was a little silver-mounted meerschaum pipe given to me by a niece of R. D. Blackmore, in memory of my friend. Sir Richard was both a teetotaler and a non-smoker, but, oddly enough, he seemed fascinated with the pipe and asked for the loan of it. In a few days it came back with a neat little silver plate on it, inscribed "R. D.

Blackmore, Lorna Doone." That was a small thing in itself, but it reveals the man.

It only remains to add, first, that this book is based on his own letters and papers which were placed at my unfettered discretion. Next, that many of his friends, both in business and private life—one or two of them could go back to his boyhood—have given me hints and reminiscences, and foremost amongst them his nearest relatives. I wish to add my sense of indebtedness to Dr. Guinness Rogers for his interesting contribution to the final chapter, and also to Mr. Chambers, of Edinburgh, for allowing me to make use of articles on the begging fraternity contributed—by Sir Richard Tangye—to the famous "Journal" which bears his name.

STUART J. REID.

BLACKWELL CLIFF,

EAST GRINSTEAD, SUSSEX.

Nov. 5, 1908.

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SIR RICHARD TANGYE

CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS

Leading traits of character—Humble environment—Wesleyanism in Cornwall—Old Cornish customs—A long-lived race—"Pick your heels up"—Ancestry and parentage—A warning that had effect—Church Rates—The Tangye family—At the British School—Boyish characteristics—A night with Elihu Burritt—Apothegms of old newspapers—Prejudices of youth—Favourite books.

It is a great mark of quality when, looking back, it can be claimed with truth for any man that, in his character, simplicity was linked with strength, and chivalrous regard for others with a lowly estimate of self. The story of any life great or small can never be perfectly told, since so much that is significant and vital lies in a region with which neither stranger nor friend can intermeddle. But it is surely possible to trace the ruling motive, as well as to record the words and deeds which were its outward manifestation, and that is the aim of the present volume.

Although Richard Tangye had many gifts, he was the most unassuming of men, and it would be alien to the whole spirit of his life to attempt a portraiture which opened with any words of exaggeration. His career was one of ever broadening success, but its real claim to abiding remembrance has its basis in moral, rather than intellectual, qualities, and, beyond all else, in a certain fearless courage of conviction, a high sense of duty, and a sympathy—at once practical and delicate—only possible to an imaginative temperament, loyal to the behests of a sensitive heart. Let it not be supposed, even for a moment, that this estimate, winning and significant though it is, gathers into a few words all that might be advanced in such directions, but to say more now would be to anticipate the story, which has yet to be told—a story, so rich in golden deeds, that it may well be left to make its own impression, and all the more, since so much of it can happily be told in the words—eloquent with sincerity—of the man himself.

He owed nothing to the gifts of fortune. He was born in lowly surroundings, and at every toll-bar on the road of life he had to make good his claims. But, like thousands of other men who have risen to distinction, he had good, honest blood in his veins. When he grew rich and famous he never dipped his flag, and, far from being ashamed of his humble start in life, was proud, in a right worthy manner, of the home of his childhood, to which he owed nothing in the material sense, but

more than can ever be told in directions which are noble, subtle, and abiding. His home—as a training ground for character—gave him, in spite of its austere and modest limitations, as excellent a start as any self-reliant lad could desire.

He was born at Illogan, near Redruth in Cornwall, on November 24, 1833, when the echoes of the Reform Bill still lingered in the Duchy, then a remote part of the country, where people took politics, as they took religion, seriously. If Cornwall in those days was severed from much of the life of the nation, its people, because of that circumstance, led their own life and grew up self-reliant, and, so far as the best of them were concerned, with a real sense of the dignity of life, and, what is more, with a deep response to the uplifting appeal of the Methodist Revival. Richard Tangye was not associated, either early or late, with this aspect of spiritual enthusiasm. His character was formed and his career developed on other and less emotional lines, but even the Society of Friends, with its widely different worship and its more tranquil outlook on life, could not escape, in Cornwall at least, from that intensity of feeling, which found expression in the genius and self-denying work of Wesleyanism, when it took by storm, in well nigh every parish of the county, the hearts of the people.

There was a great deal of lawlessness and superstition in Cornwall in the last decades of the eighteenth century, and both lingered, to some extent,

to a much later period. Richard Tangye could recall many traditions of the countryside, some of which made for righteousness, whilst others betrayed a rough and almost barbarous phase of civilisation. The pixies were supposed to haunt lonely places. It was still reckoned an evil thing to whistle after nightfall. Bull-baiting and cock-fighting, ending usually in brutal horseplay, were already a tradition. But the old animosity between people of different parishes survived, and the boys of one village indulged in fisticuffs with those of another, as a matter of course, in the days when the little fellow first went to school. Bonfires were always lighted on Midsummer Eve, and the children, joining hands, would dance around them, until, as the fun became fast and furious, the bolder would jump through the flames. Other old customs, some of them quaint and picturesque, were common. He could remember the performance of sacred plays on the village greens, and once saw "Joseph and his Brethren" acted with startling realism on a stage in the open air, on a Sunday.

The Tangyes were a long-lived, sturdy race. Richard could recall his great-grandmother, who died at the age of eighty-eight, just after Queen Victoria came to the throne, and was born in the reign of George II. His grandfather lived to ninety-five. He was a tall, active man, over 6 ft. in height, alert almost to the last and nimble on his feet. The old man greatly disliked the lazy habit, which some young people have, of walking carelessly, and shuff-

ling their feet along the ground. Richard was guilty of this habit, and many a time he found his grandfather behind him, calling out in sharp tones, "Pick your heels up." Often, in after life, when things went badly and his energies flagged, he used to say that the words came back to him as a spur to fresh exertion.

This old worthy, who was his mother's father, led the simple life in the most strenuous fashion. He was in charge of a pumping-engine in one of the mines at night, and he cultivated his little plot of land by day, and for a long term of years worked, not eight hours a day, but seventeen—"wasting," as he put it, the other seven hours in sleep. He lived on his labour, and never needed, until the end, the services of a doctor. He was an old-fashioned Methodist, and cut quite a smart figure on Sundays when he went to chapel, dressed in a blue coat with high collar and gilt buttons. It was Richard's duty in his childhood to read to the old man on Sunday afternoon, and he invariably selected the most depressing of Wesley's hymns, and was particularly fond of those which were commonly sung at funerals. He was not satisfied unless the verses were repeated in what he regarded as becoming accents of solemnity ; but sometimes he apparently fell asleep, and then the young reader would skip along in a much more lively fashion, only to be pulled up sharply by the stern admonition to read seriously.

Richard's father, Joseph Tangye, was a native of Redruth, a little town, where William Murdock

lived, long before he became famous as an engineer. It was at Redruth that his inventive genius made its first experiment with gas as an illuminant, and, in the lane in front of the Tangye cottage, he set the first locomotive in motion that ever ran in England. Many years afterwards Richard Tangye and one of his brothers placed a granite slab on the wall of Murdock's house, which bears this inscription: "William Murdock lived in this house 1782-1789; invented the first Locomotive here, and tested it in 1784; invented gas-lighting and used it in this house 1792." When Murdock's clumsy hissing machine first began to move about, even the vicar of the parish recoiled from it, with superstitious dread.

Richard Tangye was always proud that his father was the neighbour of one of the pioneers of the Industrial Revolution. In early life old Joseph Tangye had worked in a mine. He was a quiet, thoughtful man, and fond of books, though in those days there were not many within reach of the poorer classes of the community. At the time of Richard's birth he was a Wesleyan, and a class-leader at the local chapel. He became a total abstainer, his son used to say, long before the word teetotaler was invented. He afterwards joined the Society of Friends, and remained a respected member of that community to the end of his life.

The children, in such a home, simple and even straitened as it was, caught glimpses of the meaning

of life in other than a material sense, for they had not merely an upright, seriously-minded father, but a mother who was both quick-witted and deeply religious. Richard Tangye always spoke of his mother in terms of grateful and affectionate reverence. She was a shrewd, tender-hearted, comely woman, ever on the alert to help her children and never more so than when she saw them making efforts to help themselves. During an alarming visitation of cholera to the village, she stood at the post of danger, when other people fled. Her religion consisted in looking and lifting up, in meditation in the simple Quaker meeting, and in good deeds to those with whom life went even more hardly than with herself. She died in the summer of 1851, when her son Richard was eighteen, and she told him just before the end that, if her life had not been an example to him, nothing she said then could be of any avail. He was only a poor young usher at the time, with no prospects of advancement, but he said his mother somehow seemed to believe that he had a career before him, for she said, "Richard, if you ever get money, never let money get you." There were times of prosperity when he felt the need of that warning, and he used to say that at such moments, his mother's white face and earnest accents flashed upon him, and were his salvation. "Make straight paths to thyself" were her last words to him.

In Richard's early days his father kept the village shop at Illogan, and it returned the compliment

by keeping him and his large family. He farmed ten acres, moreover, and always followed the plough in Quaker dress and broad-brimmed hat. He possessed an unaccommodating Nonconformist conscience, and steadily refused to pay the Church rates. The family cow used therefore to be dis-trained in summer, and the disappointed children went with scanty milk to their porridge. In winter the flitch of bacon which hung on the rafters of the kitchen was also carried off. It turned one of those children, at least, into a most uncompromising opponent of the State Church. Richard Tangye, looking back, in the mellow light of his closing years, declared that he could never forgive the Established Church for putting people under the harrow who could not, on principle, consent to such payments. It stirred the note of revolt in him, and made him ever a fighter on behalf of religious liberty.

Plain Joseph and Anne Tangye gave names of the same sort to their six sons and three daughters. They were called respectively, James, Joseph, John, Edward, Richard, George, Anne, Alice and Sarah ; of the nine, seven grew up to manhood and womanhood and five still survive.

The eldest, James, now an octogenarian, and living in retirement in the county of his birth, was from boyhood a clever mechanic, with a marked aptitude, even then, for invention. He was in this respect the genius of the family, and no one was more ready to recognise the fact that his clever

brain was the foundation of the family fortunes than his brother Richard. At the same time, James Tangye was too timid in practical affairs and had so little business ability that, like a good many other people, he would have "missed his market," to borrow a homely saying in the great world of engineering activity, if it had not been for the enterprise, prescience, and energy of Richard.

The elder boys attended a dame school, but the younger ones were sent to the British School, where one master, with the help of monitors, did his best to instil the rudiments of learning into sixty or seventy scholars. Richard, as a child of eight, was appointed a monitor, and he used to laugh over the incident which led to his promotion. It seems that a five-syllabled word embarrassed the pupils, and when the little fellow spelt it promptly and correctly he was lifted straightway out of the ranks. Class distinctions came into play rather curiously in village schools in those days. Some of the parents at Illogan were in a position to pay extra fees, and the schoolmaster, in consequence, gave special heed to their children—a select coterie in which Richard was not included.

He had not been a monitor twelve months before, in the rough play of the place, he broke his arm. It was a bad fracture of the right arm just at the joint. It seemed, not to himself alone but to the whole household, a heavy calamity. What chance in life was there for this little son of the soil if, as the doctor said, he could never earn his living

by manual labour. When the doctor gave that verdict he took a good look at the lad, and then, turning to his mother, remarked, "He has a good-sized head; try what a little extra schooling will do for him." James and his other big brothers were by this time beginning to earn their living, so the extra schooling for Richard was not out of the question. He always declared that the broken arm was a blessing in disguise, for his father sent him to Redruth for two or three years, where he received an education which, though not wonderful, was quite beyond the power of the village master at Illogan to impart. This school was kept by William Bellows, the father of John Bellows, of Gloucester, a life-long friend of Richard Tangye, and the author of a pocket French Dictionary which is still widely known. George Tangye was also a pupil at Redruth.

Unlike his brothers, Richard was little and delicate, a dreamy, imaginative boy, though with plenty of pluck and no lack of ambition, and beginning, moreover, to realise, in the intellectual sense, that he was alive, and must beat his music out. Sensitive he was then and always; inquisitive too, mischievous, perhaps a little moody, for he did not relish having to stand aside when play grew boisterous. Still less did he like to be regarded as the undersized, ailing member of a robust brotherhood, and being independent, even then, pity over the limitations imposed by a broken arm was not at all to his mind. He seems to have

been rather a solitary little chap, standing aloof, of necessity, from a great deal of what other boys enjoyed, and, in consequence, thrown much upon himself and the companionship of books. The truth was, his mind was growing more quickly than his body, and if he had not possessed modesty and humour, which never left him, he might have developed at Redruth in the direction of conceit. But he thought soberly of himself as he ought to think, and, keeping an open mind, was sensible enough soon to discover his own limitations.

Cornwall in those days was strangely isolated from the rest of the kingdom. Its warm-hearted, out-spoken people saw so little of the great world that they were delightfully confident about their own opinions, and were apt to cherish a sleepy disdain of new ideas. One of the best things that can happen to an alert, impressionable boy is to come into contact, even for an hour or two, with a man able to lift him out of the rut of his usual environment. One memorable night Elihu Burritt, a philosopher in homespun as well as an American blacksmith, appeared at the Friends' Meeting House at Redruth, two miles from Illogan, and Richard Tangye felt for the first time that strange thrill which is the response to the magic of oratory. Elihu Burritt's theme that night was the necessity of linking together the Old World and the New by a system of Ocean Penny Postage. The enthusiasm of humanity was in that speech as well as the vision of concord and peace between two nations of one

blood. The lad in the little Meeting House caught his first glimpse of a great public question, which stirred his imagination and made his heart beat fast. The orator went his way, rich, doubtless, with local congratulations. He did not know until nearly thirty years afterwards, when United States Consul at Birmingham, that he had helped to shape the aspirations of an unknown lad. It was then that Richard Tangye, at the height of distinction, as a leader of public opinion in the capital of the midlands, grasped his hand and told him of the incident.

The whole family went to this Meeting House, Sunday by Sunday, two and two, and hand in hand, with the father and mother coming last—a prim little procession. All the children were dressed in primitive Quaker fashion.

At Redruth Richard began to look out on the world through its windows, in the shape of the Press. The first newspaper which he ever read was a halfpenny journal, published in Bristol. In those days provincial papers, though vastly less sensational than at present, had a quaint turn for moral reflection. In one corner of them, side by side with the effusions of modern poets, there was usually to be found a few homely apothegms. One which stuck to the boy's memory was a little bit of advice—"Every one can do something for the public if it is only to pick a piece of orange-peel off the pavement." It set him thinking, and led him to see that, after all, self-help was not the

only thing in life, and that, in fact, if any one was to be worth his salt he must learn to help other people. It was a little thing, of course, in itself, but the great doors of life often turn on small hinges. It was not a little thing in its outcome, since it turned that boy's mind to the duty of consideration for those who had to tread the same path after him. Looked at broadly, in its entire length and breadth, nothing was more winning in Richard Tangye's life than its consideration for others, and, since it began with a chance word in a forgotten newspaper, it is just as well, for the encouragement of scribes everywhere, that it should not be forgotten.

It must not be supposed that, either at Illogan or Redruth, Richard was ever that odious sort of young person, better known in fiction than in fact, a model boy. On his own showing, he was inclined to be lazy in spite of his quick mind—perhaps because of it—and if there were any mischief in the wind he was eager to have a share in it. He detested George Washington, because that great man was supposed never to have told a lie, a statement which he asserted was a lie on the face of it. In those days young people were taught writing by the compulsory transcribing of some text or moral reflection. "To be good is to be happy" was one of these counsels of perfection, which proved to him a dark saying. But, "Necessity is the mother of invention" was a statement which he declared, young as he was, he had proved up to the hilt. His weakness for taking things easy led his parents

to present him with a little book called "Idle Dick," a homethrust which led him, on his own confession, not to amend his ways, but to try and live up to the title.

Late in life he used to say that few books fell into his hands at that time, but those that came were of the best. Before he was ten years of age he knew his Bible, or at least those parts of it to which the heart of childhood makes a swift response. He had mastered Bunyan's immortal allegory, and the "Pilgrim's Progress" fired his imagination and set him dreaming of noble deeds. He had read the romantic pages of "Robinson Crusoe," and had caught boylike the love of adventure. He knew almost by heart "The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin," and that homely philosopher had instilled into his opening mind the lessons of thrift, diligence and self-help. Sensational trash happily did not come his way, and he had good reason to be glad in after years not only for the uplifting spell of the books which he had read on the threshold of life, but also for his unconscious escape from less worthy appeals.

CHAPTER II

AT SIDCOT SCHOOL

Leaving home—First experiences at Sidcot—Condition of the School in 1837—Charles Feinaigle—New system of mnemonics—"Shearing the flock"—Schoolboy gardeners—Counsels of perfection—The School Magazine—Richard Tangye's reminiscences of school-life—An archæological collection—Experience as pupil-teacher—The School newspaper—Franklin's Autobiography—Kicking against school limitations—William Tallack—A text that shot home—First visit to London—Wonders of the Great Exhibition—Free to face the world.

RICHARD was more fortunate than his elder brothers. He was not put to work too soon. His weak health and his injured arm forbade rough manual labour. His quick mind and his eager zest for learning led his parents, with whom the sharp pressure of life was beginning somewhat to relax, to think that the boy was worth a more extended schooling than they had been able to give their other children.

So it came about that, early in 1847, he quitted his father's roof in search of knowledge. He left Illogan one chill morning in February of that year, when in his twelfth year, for the Friends' School at Sidcot, in Somersetshire, where John had

already been a pupil, and where George, in due course, followed him. He had never been ten miles from home before, so it was a great experience. He was a timid, shy lad, and he never forgot how depressed he felt when the last good-bye had been said and he was alone on the wet deck of the steamer, in which he sailed from Hayle to Bristol. That little voyage, though uneventful in itself, had for the boy all the charm of novelty. He used to say that it stirred his curiosity, and made him wish to see more of the world that lay beyond the heaving waters. Once, on shore at Bristol, piloted through the busy, unfamiliar streets by one of the seamen, he was quickly at the house of a worthy Quaker, to whose safe keeping he had been consigned. It chanced that another Friend who lived at Sidcot was in the city just then, and, hearing that the boy was on his way to school, he took him all the way to its door in his own carriage. So the last stage of the journey seemed quite a state procession.

Sidcot school stands in the Cheddar Valley, amid the Mendip Hills, and possesses a well kept and extensive garden. The whole place, when Richard bashfully made his bow to the Headmaster, was locked in, what Whittier calls, a "tumultuous privacy of snow." The winter of 1846-7 was exceptionally hard all over England, and the boys of the school had made huts and snow-men, and were prepared to pelt all comers. Snow seldom lies long enough in Cornwall to give the lads of the Delectable Duchy much opportunity for this merry diversion, and

Richard quickly discovered that he was no match for the older boys of Sidcot at snow-balling. But, when he was getting the worst of it, a big lad came along who had been befriended by Richard's brother, and who took him, there and then, under his protection.

But snow-balling was a mere incident. There was the master to face, and he, with praiseworthy alacrity, put the new pupil through his facings, in order to settle his place in the school. Richard was on his mettle with the great man. He answered the questions put to him so well that he got into, what he modestly called, a "false position" at the start. In other words, the place assigned to him was in an advanced class, where he felt like a pretender. Probably the master was not as mistaken as his new scholar, at the moment, supposed. Anyhow, the boy felt he must bestir himself, and he did so to such good purpose that in a few months the distance was bridged, and he was abreast of his class.

Sidcot opened the door of opportunity to him. It gave him new interests. It taught him to use his brains. Alike at work and at play, its daily round called forth all his powers. He began to acquire confidence in himself, and not all the lessons which he learnt were given by the masters. The boys at his side had their share in the process of development; they rubbed off his corners, and made him realise his limitations. There is nothing like the discipline of a school, where the boys live

under the same roof and are thrown continually together, not merely in lessons, but in leisure, to take the nonsense out of a little chap who has just escaped from his mother's apron-strings. Few things are more dangerous to a boy than the trick of self-pity. Richard Tangye, at that stage of his life, was somewhat given to that weakness, but Sidcot knocked it out of him.

Sidcot school, in those days, though full of life, had a hard struggle for existence. It had been practically rebuilt in 1837-8, and there was a considerable debt on the new buildings, and constant appeals had to be made for funds, for the Quakers in the west of England at that period, though frugal, were not rich. Up to the year 1847 the advantages of the school were exclusively appropriated by members of the Society. The teaching staff was also safeguarded in the same way, but in that year, to the considerable dismay of some old supporters of the school, a new head-teacher, who was not a Friend, was appointed. His name was Charles Feinaigle, a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, and the son of a well-known German educational expert, Baron Feinaigle, author of a book which once had a considerable vogue, called "The New Art of Memory." The Baron lectured on this subject in England and Scotland at the beginning of last century, and was afterwards placed in charge of a school at Dublin, which was founded on his own principles. His "Art of Memory" attracted the attention of Byron, who, in his description of

Donna Inez, alludes to the old professor in the line :—"For her, Feinaigle's was a useless art."

The son of this old worthy, with his German manners and outlook, and his fresh alert mind, must have presented a contrast to the other teachers of more sober speech and aspect, who had seen less of the world and been trained in a narrower school. Richard Tangye always held Mr. Feinaigle in high regard, and all the more because there was between them the common bond of humour. He used to recall the manner in which the German master, who was an ardent disciple of his father, introduced the new system of mnemonics amongst the elder boys. He laid great stress on accuracy, and took infinite pains to fix the dates of great historical events in his pupil's minds. His plan was certainly ingenious, for he seized upon anything in the room to illustrate his teaching.

Punctuation, when the lads took down on their slates a long passage from his lips, was not always easy. One boy hit upon the expedient of a lavish use of commas and was promptly asked if he kept a "comma caster." Sometimes the teacher would enliven the proceedings with a conundrum. Like most absent-minded men, he had odd little tricks. One morning, having lathered his face before leaving his bedroom, he continued to shave himself while actually descending the stair, a risky operation, performed with such celerity as to elicit the admiration of his astonished pupils. He broadened

the curriculum in the direction of science, and made the study of astronomy fascinating to the lads.

The local barber from Axbridge used to come over once a month to "shear the flock." His name was Tuthill, and he took himself seriously. He used to tell the astonished boys that he was descended from Roger de Tuthill, whom he declared was knighted at Cheddar Cliffs because he saved a certain royal personage from falling into a chasm there. The old man used to vigorously handle his scissors at the lower end of the schoolroom when the work of education was in full progress. He would call out abruptly, in a deep nasal tone, "Next Boy," and the distraction of the lesson was considerable. On the barber's appearance, after Mr. Feinaigle was in authority, just as his operations were about to begin, the new master startled him by the peremptory order, "Get out of the room." Taken aback, he meekly inquired, "Where am I to go?" and was promptly told, "Go under the stairs in the passage." It was a dark corner but that did not matter, except perhaps to risky and adventurous touches of the scissors; henceforth it became known, in school-boy jargon, as "The Shearing Yard."

When Richard Tangye was at Sidcot it was the custom of the boys to work in the grounds half a day every week under the direction of the head gardener, and sometimes one of the teachers would read to them whilst they were so engaged. This

little bit of manual labour was a great relief to the ordinary routine of the school. It gave the lads, moreover, a love of nature, as well as a practical knowledge of plants. Occasionally, when local Friends were assembled, each pupil was expected to cover a large sheet of paper with specimens of his writing. They were all given the same maxim—a couplet—to write out. Richard Tangye used to recall two of the quaint counsels of perfection, which, in the 'Forties, he indited for the inspection of the grave Friends.

One was :

“Pilgrims who journey in the narrow way
Should go as little cumbered as they may.”

The other ran :

“Persevere ye perfect men,
And ever keep the precepts ten.”

Sidcot school is a very different place to-day, and the education which it now gives is much more advanced. Indeed, the training it offers at present is abreast, in the best sense, of modern demands. It even boasts of a School Magazine, and to the pages of that journal Richard Tangye contributed, in 1890, some recollections of his life there, on which this chapter is in part based. Here it may be well to fall back on his own words, especially as they give a realistic and amusing picture of his life at the school in far-off days.

“On examination day, our dinner consisted of

cake, which was eaten in the playground while the Friends occupied our dining-room, and I remember being very much astonished at hearing that each person had to pay half a crown for his dinner ; I had not previously heard of such costly entertainments. During one General Meeting there was a great discussion upon the question of victualling the school, some Friends holding that too much animal food was consumed, while others took the opposite view, and asked for a larger supply. It was observed with some amusement that a Friend named *Pease* advocated a greater use of vegetables, while another John *Veale* urged the advisability of a 'more liberal meat diet.'

"We used greatly to enjoy our walks to Cheddar, Axbridge, Crook's Peak, Blackdown, and other places, and the memory of these excursions still remains a great pleasure. One excursion, which was a source of unfailing interest, was to the bone caverns at Banwell. The custodian, the venerable Mr. Beard, was a great character, and used to boast of having puzzled Professor Sedgwick with his old-world bones. The venerable Beard had a wonderful collection of curiosities, amongst which was a relic of Marie Antoinette. The collection was catalogued in verse, and this relic was thus described, 'The Queen of France her teapot, which died by the guillotine.'

"Old Sidcotians will remember Bob Miller, who used to perform postman's duties for the school. Many a time has he asked me for a 'few

old broken down steel pens, what were no good,' in order that he might learn to write.

"Most of the villagers around the school were very friendly with the boys; but the people of Shipham still retained somewhat of the evil reputation that belonged to them when Hannah More tried to civilise them. It was said, with I know not what truth, that they sometimes made raids upon the Woodborough gardens, and John Nye, the village mason, with the then recent Sikh War fresh in his memory, used to say, 'They came down like *spikes* from the hilltops!' Then who doesn't remember Joseph Ham, the Axbridge shoemaker, who examined our boots every Monday evening, often dismissing us with the remark that 'They would run another week.' Joseph Ham was an old soldier, who served in the American War of 1812, and I well remember his description of a Yankee attack upon a mill which his regiment held, and how they often had a shot at General Jackson, as he rode along on his white horse, but keeping well out of range of the Brown Bess of that day."

Richard Tangye was only fifteen when, in 1848, he became a pupil teacher at Sidcot. He used to say that he quickly discovered that his new position was not altogether easy. His presence at that time was not commanding. It is not a wise plan to put a lad in even partial authority over those who have known him as fellow pupils, and Richard Tangye, at the start, had his troubles. Sometimes

the boys led him a dance, especially when he took them out for a long walk. On one occasion they proved so frolicsome that the young usher had to leave them to their own devices. Even in those days he possessed some of the family cleverness in mechanical directions. He once took to pieces a working model of a locomotive steam-engine, and then put together the parts to the minutest detail. Very amusing, too, were the inquiries of old Friends after each other's health; 'How art thou to-day, Thomas?' 'Thank, thee, not very well; I've a touch of the liver complaint.' 'Oh, never mind the liver, so long as the heart is all right,' was the solemn rejoinder.

Literary ambitions were stirring in the school. When Richard was sixteen, the boys determined to start a newspaper, and he was appointed Editor. In this capacity he wrote occasional articles himself, sat in judgment on the efforts of the pupils, and then, in spite of his newly found dignity, was expected, in order to give an air of uniformity and neatness to the new venture, to copy out the whole of each number himself. This journalistic enterprise, like a good many more important ones, ran uneasily and was short-lived. The immediate cause of its abrupt termination was the exercise of Richard's editorial rights in rejecting a communication which he considered too homely and realistic for any responsible journal. Young writers are apt to be thin-skinned, and the refusal of the story killed the paper.

The Friends, when they paid their official visits to the school, took the opportunity in their own fashion to test the progress of the work. One old Friend was examining Richard Tangye's class when he put a question that the pupil teacher thought was too advanced for the boys. Before the embarrassed scholars could reveal their ignorance the young teacher interrupted with the remark, "They have not got so far as that, please." Sometimes the questions which were put were a little startling, especially from such grave lips. The boys one day were both amused and taken aback, when one old visitor seriously asked, "Which was the good king and which was the bad—Henry the VIII. or George IV.?" There lives no record of reply.

One of the visitors gave the young master a bit of advice which he never forgot. "Always keep a lesson in advance of thy class." That was all very well, but to follow it literally was apt to prove disconcerting, if there was a clever boy in the form. It was not, however, the quick-witted, alert scholars who embarrassed him, but mischievous lads, scarcely younger than himself, who were inclined to challenge his authority. Still, though the position was difficult, it had its advantages. It kept him learning. It brought him into contact with cultivated people. There was a good library, even in those days, at Sidcot, and Richard turned it to admirable account. The strict discipline of the place, and his own modest share in enforcing it, was

salutary. He used to say that it was at Sidcot that he learned how to command by first learning how to obey. Still, he did not relish the position of an usher; he had dreams of his own, which could not be fulfilled if he stayed within the walls of a school-room. He was reading over again at this time Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography, and it fired his ambition.

Quite early in his career as a pupil teacher, Richard Tangye realised that he had made a mistake in yielding to the persuasions of his schoolmaster to remain at Sidcot in that capacity. He wanted to get out into the world himself, rather than to prepare others for its battles. He thought, even then, that he was better qualified for a commercial life. But he was poor, friendless, and inexperienced, so he yielded, and took up the work that, at the moment, lay nearest. His duties were heavy; they began, winter and summer, at half-past five in the morning, and continued, with little interval, till nine at night. Even when the boys went up to bed, he could not drop off to sleep until all was quiet, for he was held responsible for good order in the dormitory. "I felt," was his own confession, "I was unfitted for the work, and time did not reconcile me to it." In return for his services, he received board, lodging, clothing and five shillings a quarter as pocket money, besides his travelling expenses. Again and again he petitioned the school committee to cancel his indentures.

It seemed to those in authority that he would

make an excellent teacher, but he was convinced that, as his heart was not in the work, he was only courting failure to stay. He was warned about the pitfalls of the city, and assured that its streets were not paved with gold. Nay, he was told that thousands of young fellows as good as himself were finding it very hard to make their way in the fierce rivalry of commerce. Talk of that kind was of no avail ; it only made him more determined. Three years, to an ardent and restless youth of eighteen, seemed an intolerable time to be under the yoke, and that was the unexpired period which his indentures represented, when, at last taking his courage in his hands, though not knowing what he would do with his liberty if he won it, he made so energetic an appeal, that in response they were reluctantly cancelled.

Richard Tangye, whilst at Sidcot, according to a tradition which still lingers, was a bright, kindly lad, with more humour than most of his companions, and considerable cleverness in making puns. One story that is told of him, when he had been advanced to the position of junior master and acted as librarian, throws into relief his sense of fun. A certain boy was continually demanding a fresh book, when it was well known to everybody that he had not troubled himself to master the contents of those he returned. Richard, nettled at these constant, and careless, requests, at length brought matters to a crisis by offering the importunate boy Locke "On the Human Understanding." That

was rather forbidding reading, and the proffered volume was declined. The young librarian, however, was obdurate, and refused in turn to part with any more of the books in his charge until that particular volume had been mastered.

One of Richard's closest friends at Sidcot was William Tallack, who afterwards became widely and honourably known in connection with the work of the Howard Society. When Richard grew restless over his work as an usher, William Tallack did everything in his power to encourage him to persevere, pointing out how valuable the training was likely to prove, whatever career his friend might eventually determine to follow. Shortly before Richard left Sidcot, William Tallack said to him one day, "Richard, I shall see thee riding in thy carriage, when I shall be walking on the pavement." Nothing at the moment seemed more unlikely, and his friend jocularly replied, "Well, William, when that happens, I will give thee a lift." Many years afterwards it did happen. Richard Tangye was driving along a country road, and there, trudging in front of him, was his old schoolfellow. The carriage was pulled up, the old prediction was laughingly recalled, and the two friends went on together. This friendship endured all the changes of sixty years, and one of the last persons he ever saw when his life was ending at Coombe Bank in the autumn of 1906 was his old schoolfellow.

Richard Tangye used to say that what finally

decided him to leave the teaching profession was the text of a sermon which he heard delivered in the little Meeting House. It was on the words "What shall the end thereof be." He certainly applied the solemn words in a way the preacher did not intend, for this is his confession. "I knew if I stayed on I should miss my chance of congenial occupation, and should 'end' in failure—so I went!"

Nearly a year before Richard's indentures were cancelled by the school committee at Sidcot, the dull monotony of his life there was broken by his first visit to London. He was at home during the holiday of the summer of 1851, and one day his elder brother James,—suddenly enriched by the present of a five pound note from his employer—announced that he meant to go and see the Great Exhibition, about which all the world just then was talking, and, what was more, that he intended to take Richard with him.

They reached London late on a summer night, but, tired as they were with the long journey, for there were no swift expresses in those days, with the chance of meals by the way, they could not rest until they had made a pilgrimage to Hyde Park to look at the glittering Palace. That which attracted them beyond all else was the machinery, and getting close up to the vast building they peered, in the gathering twilight, through the glass wall and feasted their eyes on the great locomotive, "The Lord of the Isles." During the next few days the brothers not only explored the Exhibition from end to end,

but, as Richard put it, saw all the sights of London that could be seen without payment, for the purchasing power of two or three sovereigns had steadily to be kept in mind, since that spelt the whole of their resources. There were exceptions, however, to this rule, for one or two show places proved resistless, notably Madame Tussaud's Wax Works, where James Tangye accidentally trod on Cobbett's toe and stopped to beg the old man's pardon.

Richard was forced to leave London before his brother, because school duties summoned him back to Sidcot, and, as money by this time was running out, he only accepted enough for the journey to Bristol, saying that he knew the Captain of the Cornish steamer, which sailed from that port, and could get credit for the rest of the way. He never forgot that first glimpse of the great city in that wonderful year, when it was filled with crowds of sightseers from all parts of the world, and probably it quickened his determination at all hazards, to escape from the dull round of life in a small provincial school.

So it came to pass that, in search of a living, he quitted the school at Sidcot in 1852, with a plain but sound education. His ambition did not soar so high as to lead him to dream of making his fortune. He was only a boy eager to see the world, and eager in consequence to get out of bounds. The love of machinery was already beginning to cast its spell over him, and just then the post which he coveted

beyond all else was to get employment on a railway, and, if possible, to become, in due course, a station-master. Meanwhile, as he said farewell to his companions, and the gates of the old school closed behind him, he was content with the knowledge that he was alive, young, free, and that the road lay open before him.

CHAPTER III

HIS START IN LIFE

Waiting for an opening—Indebtedness to Sidcot—Bed-rock convictions—The post of stationmaster—"Fit for something better"—Obtains clerkship in Birmingham—The Midland capital in 1852—Joseph Sturge befriends Richard—The first and last master—The young clerk's first public service—Life in lodgings—George Tangye comes to Birmingham—Death of Joseph Tangye, senior.

It was one thing to strike out into the open, but another to know which way to turn. High spirits, evoked by the sense of freedom from uncongenial drudgery, were quickly succeeded in Richard's mind by a dull sense of depression. He was always peculiarly sensitive, and, in spite of his alert and resolute nature, was in those early days curiously at the mercy of his surroundings. Long afterwards he confessed that when he left Sidcot he was filled with what he called a great terror. He knew next to nothing of the world, for his life so far had been passed in the simple and ordered quietness of his home, or in the routine of a school where those principles were scarcely less recognised. "I suddenly realised," were his own words, "that I was face to

face with the world, with but few friends who could help me, and with no business experience." The Bible, then and always, was a very real book to him, and he found himself at that moment, as he himself put it, in full sympathy with the Israelites "when they looked back upon the flesh-pots of Egypt." He even asserts that it was in his mind to retrace his steps, and to go back to his old desk in the school.

Then it was that his knowledge of Benjamin Franklin's early struggles stood him in good stead. If one young fellow had succeeded, why should not another? So he took courage, and, in the simple faith of his boyhood, went forward. But he never forgot his old school, and when life went well with him, to an extent far beyond the most sanguine dreams of his youth, both he and his brother George came to its help with substantial assistance.

One of the early benefactors of Sidcot was the Quaker philanthropist and merchant prince of Bristol, George Thomas. One day Richard Tangye, when he was just beginning to prosper in life, happened to travel in the same train with this fine old man. Presently the latter said, "Richard, I understand thou art getting on well in business. I shall not live always, and Sidcot will want a friend some day." On this hint Richard and his brother built new class-rooms and bedrooms, and in other ways helped to increase the efficiency of the old place, which had equipped them for their start in life.

Meanwhile, in the summer of 1852, Richard had to face the problem of what to make of the liberty for which he had craved so hard, and had at last won. The prospect was not reassuring. The world had offered nothing better to his brother James, although his inventive abilities claimed worthier recognition, than a post with a country wheelwright, whilst Joseph, in spite of his reluctance, had been apprenticed to a blacksmith. But once at work, both of them had set Richard a good example, by hammering cheerfully away at wheels and horse-shoes till the way opened to something better. They both mastered their trades, and then, following their natural bent, they became, in the modest sense of the term, engineers, and in due time were the pioneers of the fortunes of the family. Unlike his brothers, Richard was a bookish boy, but the ambition to push on in life was in the blood of them all, and, with it, the wholesome recognition that, if this was to be the case, they must depend on their own exertions. All of them stood on the bed-rock of necessity; they had nothing to lose, and everything to gain. They had the good sense to see clearly at the start that, if they were to succeed, they must paddle their own canoe.

Richard ought to have been called Joseph, for he was the youngest but one of the tribe, and he dreamed dreams and saw visions. That broken arm had thrown him, to a large extent, out of touch with the rough play of other youths. He had

plenty of time for thinking when, as a shy young usher, he tried to keep order at Sidcot, and, to do him credit, he had thought to some purpose. He came out of the school brimful of wise saws and good resolutions, to say nothing of a number of clear-cut convictions about right and wrong, the need of frugality, temperance, moral courage, and self-control in every direction, if the battle of life was to be fought right worthily. In those days lads of eighteen were somehow older in character than they are now, and they took a more serious, some people would say a more sombre, view of life. Richard had been brought up in an atmosphere where gravity was habitual, in which conscience was enthroned, and duty was supreme. If it made him, to some extent, introspective, it at least sent him forth into the world with an overpowering sense of the reality of life, and of the need of circumspection. Out of it grew a certain simple dignity of bearing, a recoil from exaggerated sentiment, especially in matters of religion, a noble sense of truth, alike in word and in deed. These may sound homespun virtues, but, when they constitute the driving belt of a human life, all things that are lovely and of good report become possible.

On leaving Sidcot, Richard had joined the unemployed. He envied the clever hands of his brothers, who had a knack of doing things which he did not possess—mere manual labour as yet, though shot through with the prophecy of something better.

What was he to do ? He was neither wheelwright nor blacksmith, nor even master, in any real sense, of the tasks of a pedagogue. He went home to think the problem out, rather abashed at his own audacity in breaking away from the school, and somewhat disposed to imagine that the straight-cut homely friends of the small community in which his father figured were inclined to think him a failure. But, if his hands were idle, his brain was busy, thrashing out old problems and new, during that time, not of rest, but uncertainty. One thing was plain, he had not the mechanical skill, much less the inventive faculty, of his elder brothers. But he could express himself well, he had plenty of energy, and he was sanguine enough to believe that, given the chance, his business aptitude would emerge to some purpose.

He tried, first of all, to see if there was anything in the plan he had cherished whilst at school of obtaining work on the railway. The iron road by his time had come close to his father's door. The chairman of the Company had been nothing more important in his youth than a workman in the mines of Cornwall. If Dr. Smith, for such was his title now, had risen on the principle of promotion by merit, why should not Richard Tangye do the same, at least as far as the responsibility of a stationmaster was concerned ?

Dr. Smith had toiled in the old days side by side with the lad's father, and he was one of those men who are not accustomed to forget

their friends. He was therefore not difficult of approach, and Richard's first interview was with him. The conversation was disappointing in one sense, for, to borrow a railway phrase, it shunted the lad on to another line. "Take my advice, try for something else; you are fit for something better than to be a stationmaster." It was the word fitly spoken. It did not give him work, but it gave him courage. Dr. Smith thought him worthy of something better, and so, to fall back on his own words, "I determined to adhere to my resolution to obtain employment in some business house." His old schoolmaster had shaken his head about his chances in that direction. Clerks were even then cheap. They were miserably paid, and their prospects, for the most part, were uncertain. He would have to start—so he had been assured at Sidcot, if he turned his feet in that direction—on something less than a pound a week, and without food and shelter, to say nothing of the clothing and pocket money which the school provided.

Richard kept a sharp eye at Illogan on such newspapers as fell into his hands, and especially that part of them which contained a list of situations vacant. One day an advertisement caught his attention. It offered the position of clerk in a small engineering establishment in Birmingham. He applied for this post, and obtained it. In that lowly way began the association of the Tangyes with the great capital of the Midlands.

It was a happy circumstance which led Richard

Tangye to Birmingham. There were few places in England more full of stir and life, religious, political, social, and industrial. Twenty years earlier Birmingham had played a memorable part in the great struggle over the Reform Bill, and it was then, and long afterwards, what it assuredly is not to-day, a Radical stronghold. Like Manchester, it was one of the chief centres of the Industrial Revolution. Many notable men were amongst its inhabitants, and the public spirit and business push of the whole community were vigorous. It possessed even then, to some small extent, institutions for the betterment of the people—notably the Mechanics' Institute; but there were no public libraries or free reading rooms. Surely any lad might have counted himself happy to start life in a place which possessed so many advantages.

This particular lad was exceptionally fortunate in finding his way thither, since the Society of Friends held an honourable and important position in the community, whilst one of their number, Joseph Sturge, was a philanthropist of widespread renown, who had done much for the emancipation of the slave, and was one of the earliest advocates of Peace and International Arbitration. Joseph Sturge was as much esteemed by the inhabitants in those days as was John Bright twenty years later. The youth from Cornwall, who first set foot in Birmingham on December 28, 1852, was destined to have relations with both of these eminent men, and also with John Cadbury, father of Mr. George

Cadbury, with whom he was closely associated in public work in Birmingham, and who remained to the last his intimate friend.

Richard Tangye was only one of many young men who came under the influence of Joseph Sturge, then at the height of his career as a philanthropist. The good man never lost an opportunity of enlisting the help of young people of his own persuasion who came to the meeting-house, as Richard Tangye did, with letters of introduction from Friends in other parts of the country, and presently the young stranger was enlisted as a teacher in the Severn Street Sunday School, of which Joseph Sturge was the founder. It was the best thing that could have happened to him, for it brought him at once into good company, and identified him at the start with Christian work. Just before he left his home for Birmingham an old Friend said to him, "Richard, thou art going into a large town, where there are many temptations. Thy father has left thee a good name. See that thou keep it bright. Begin to give as soon as thou begins to get." Who can say how far those wise and simple words helped to shape to fine issues the career of the young Cornish lad?

He was fortunate in another respect. His master, Thomas Worsdell—his first and only employer—was himself a Friend, and long afterwards Richard Tangye publicly expressed his gratitude for the forbearance with which he was treated at the outset of his business career. Thomas Worsdell lived long

enough to see his young clerk grow famous, and for forty years the friendship between them was unbroken. The prophecy about his wages as a clerk which had been made at Sidcot was fulfilled to the letter, for his salary was £50 a year. It was a great change to pass from the beauty of the Mendip Hills to dreary interminable streets, "ankle-deep in mud," and to find that Mr. Worsdell's modest "works" lay in a narrow lane in the most dismal part of Birmingham. The office which was the scene of his own duties was in a loft, and the only approach to it was up a step-ladder. When the shy young fellow stumbled into the place, he found his new master writing at a desk in hat and overcoat. He looked round and said briskly, "I am glad you have turned up. Will you copy these invoices," and so, without more ado, his business life began there and then.

Blood is thicker than water, and Richard did not forget his brothers, still toiling away in obscurity in Cornwall. He was the path-finder of the family, and through him, they all found employment in a town which was peculiarly fitted to give full play to their mechanical skill.

There were plenty of theatres and music-halls, but in those days there were no well-lighted rooms where the news of the world was accessible to all comers. Richard Tangye kept aloof from theatres and music-halls; he had been brought up to regard them with old-fashioned aversion. He became a subscriber to a dingy news-room of a kind now

happily well-nigh extinct, and in his free hours kept himself in touch with the tidings of the day, or rather of the week, for the only journals provided then in a provincial town appeared at that interval. He read in one of these journals, in the spring of 1853, a series of articles on the relations of masters and men, which greatly interested him. The writer laid stress on the duty of employers to pay wages on Friday nights, and to close their works at one o'clock on Saturdays. Mr. Worsdell's men dropped work at half-past four on the last day of the week, and then they had to wait, sometimes for a couple of hours, whilst the amount of their earnings was calculated in the loft, and this, in the words of the young clerk, was "a fruitful cause of ill-humour."

One day he ventured to suggest to his master, whether it were possible for him to try the new method recommended by the newspaper. He hinted, that if the men's earnings were calculated each day, much time would be saved at the end of the week, and he urged all that he could on behalf of payment on Fridays. Mr. Worsdell determined to give the plan a trial, and to let the men free on Saturdays at one o'clock, on condition that they worked an extra half-hour on other days of the week, and also pay them their wages on Fridays. The system answered exceptionally well. Other employers fell in with it, and, before very long, payment of wages on Friday night, and a half-day's work on Saturday, became the rule in Birmingham and

the district. That was the first public service Richard Tangye rendered to the great community, which he afterwards so largely benefited. It was a bold stroke for a young clerk, who had not been six months in the place to make, and it was the first awakening in him of a finer spirit than that of self-help—the desire to help others, and those who were, at that time at least, in a very real sense, conscripts of toil.

A young fellow with less than a pound a week, all told, must of necessity live sparingly. Life in lodgings in a great town on such a sum, which had to cover everything in the way of expenditure, was rather dreary. Richard, with his sociable instincts, found it to be a bit of experience which called for all his pluck. His landlady was of the hard, forbidding type, and there was little comfort under her roof. Her life, poor soul, was doubtless cloaked in gloom, for to exist by letting apartments in a mean street to badly-paid clerks is not exactly an exhilarating occupation. Although the pathos of such a position made its unspoken appeal to her quick-eyed, sympathetic lodger, it did not tend to raise his own spirits. But he took short views. It was nothing new to him to endure hardness. He was full of the eager zest of life. He was not unduly anxious about his prospects; he knew the “way would open,” as Friends say, if he kept up his heart, did his duty, and persevered.

Long afterwards he said, “Many men make shipwreck of their lives, because they despise the day

of small things." He was determined not to make that mistake. His business chances just then seemed to promise very little; the temptation was to let things drift, and to obey the cynical maxim—"Do as little as you can, and slur that." But it was resisted; he followed a more excellent way, and found, what all brave men find, that drudgery is not merely disarmed, but becomes itself the road to self-victory if not material success, when it is accepted as inevitable. "There is no such thing in life," he used to say, when years had brought the philosophic mood, "as a 'trifle,' the performance of a small duty is quite as important as doing of great things." So, in spite of long hours and hard work in the loft, and loneliness, under straitened conditions, in spare time, his character was shaped in simple loyalty to the task which was nearest. Richard Tangye, in those days in Birmingham was, in fact, at school again, learning lessons even more valuable than the geography, history, arithmetic, and what else, which he had acquired in the half-cloistral life of Sidcot.

Presently the cloud lifted; he saw a chance in Birmingham for his younger brother George. The latter had some training in book-keeping, and, when the opportunity of following Richard to Birmingham came, he was a young clerk earning ten shillings a week in an estate office. The new situation which his brother found for him was that of clerk of the works with an engineer and iron-founder

in a modest way. George Tangye arrived in Birmingham at Lawley Street station, which was the Midland terminus at that time, one September night in 1853. Richard was on the platform, and the small trunk was soon on a wheelbarrow, and presently the two—so far as their means went, they represented Tangye Brothers, Limited, in a very literal sense—were comparing notes over a frugal meal in what was henceforth their joint lodging. Richard, in view of the approaching winter, had purchased a stock of coals, and he needed thirty shillings to settle the bill. George handed him the money, and began work next day at six o'clock in the morning with eighteen pence in his pocket. His salary was £50 a year, but, since union is strength, the wages which the two received enabled them to keep their heads above water. Both were resolutely determined that, whatever happened, they would not run into debt.

In the spring of the following year their good old father in Cornwall died, after a short illness. Richard went down to the funeral at the end of March, and his heart was gladdened by the wide and deep respect which was shown to his father's memory. The gentle, kindly old man had children who rose up to call him blessed. He was not given to many words ; he was content to let his life speak instead. It spoke of faith, courage, duty, for his character was like a bit of granite, with flowers growing in the crevices of the rock. He was always poor, but he contrived somehow to help other people in

their time of need, for he held all that he had, as a trust, and he taught his children to do the same, and to redeem whatever opportunities came to them, as life broadened out before their advancing steps. The words which such a man speaks to his children on the threshold of life in the magic circle of home, are not heard by the world. But, to the heart of a loyal and trustful son, no words possess more vitality. They sink deep, and like seed sown in good ground, they bear fruit, to all men's knowledge, after many days.

CHAPTER IV

HIS OWN MASTER

Leaves the firm of Evans and Worsdell—"R. Tangye, General Merchant"—Working up a business—The first workshop—Joins in partnership with his brothers—Relations with Mr. Worsdell—Beginnings of a great industry—Qualities of the five brothers—The "driving-belt" of the business—Richard's dilemma in London—A tramp towards Birmingham and notes of the journey—The "inconvenience" of poverty—A struggle that made for success.

THE year 1855 was marked by steady growth in the business of Mr. Worsdell, whom Richard Tangye always used to describe as his first and only master. This prosperity was due, in part, to Richard's energy, and, perhaps still more, because James Tangye was now foreman of the works, and Joseph, who was also a clever mechanician, had already justified his existence in the concern by adding a new department to its activities, in the shape of hydraulic apparatus. George Tangye, by this time, had also joined the concern as clerk of the works, and so all the four brothers were now in the service of the firm.

The growth of the business meant the need of

more capital. A new partner was accordingly introduced, and the name of the firm became Worsdell and Evans. Richard's relations with Mr. Worsdell, who was a Quaker of the old school, exact, considerate, if firm and sparing of words, had always been cordial ; but new men often mean new methods, and in this case they apparently meant little else. In consequence, the position became intolerable not so much to James, Joseph, and George as to Richard, who was not, like them, in the workshop, but in the office, and therefore at the elbow of the new partner. Richard was a spirited, independent, and perhaps at this time not only an outspoken, but an angular, young fellow. He had always been absolutely trusted by Mr. Worsdell, and when the new partner insisted that a window should be placed in the partition which divided the office of the clerk from that of the master, and announced that he intended to place a curtain on his side of the glass, the indignity was resented. He told Mr. Evans that Mr. Worsdell had never found it necessary to keep a watch upon him, and that he was sorry he could not submit to it now without loss of self-respect. The new partner, however, proved obdurate, and so Richard, without more ado, resigned his position. He had been in this situation between three and four years, and his salary when he left it had been advanced to £80 a year.

Most young men of twenty-two, with no endowments beyond character and capacity, would have

set about at once, with more or less anxiety, to seek a new situation; but Richard Tangye was not built that way. He decided he could do better, and young as he was, felt convinced that he had been long enough in leading-strings. Anyhow, for better or worse, he resolved, there and then, to start business on his own account. He had no capital, but he had no debts. He had no influential friends either in the trade or outside it, but he had plenty of energy, and no lack of self-reliance. So he made the plunge, and, with a business card inscribed "R. Tangye, General Merchant," and a bag of samples of steel-bolts, nuts, nails, and the like, he found his way back to Cornwall, in search of such modest orders as he could pick up.

Doors open to people who trust in themselves, at least when there is reason for the faith that is in them. Manufacturers, who had known the young Cornish clerk when he stood at his desk at Mr. Worsdell's, showed their confidence in him by offering him their goods on credit. That, of course, is not uncommon, or young merchants making a start for themselves in the world would be hard pressed. Credit is usually sharply conditioned by a time-limit of three or six months. In Richard Tangye's case the only stipulation made was that he was to pay just as soon, and no sooner, than he could. This cheered him not a little, and all the more as the men who came to his help declared that they knew he would not order their

goods on speculation. It was a hard fight, nevertheless, to get orders on his own account from mine-owners and railway officials; but it was a happy thought to go down to Cornwall in search of them, for there, if anywhere south of the Tweed, folks are clannish, and more ready to trust a son of the soil than a stranger, however fair-spoken. Still the result of his first year's trading was not exactly exhilarating, though it paved the way for more important transactions, which presently turned to the advantage of the whole family. He had already made, by his energy and address, a favourable impression in business circles in Birmingham, and this was itself an important asset when the new firm of Tangye Brothers was started.

Richard Tangye, in his capacity of “General Merchant,” began operations in the summer of 1856, and ended them in the autumn of the following year. His place of business during that time was, of course, Birmingham, though he was far too poor at the outset to rent an office. But he had made friends before this, through his bookish tastes, with the late William White, who afterwards became first an alderman, and then mayor of the capital of the Midlands. Mr. White, who was a bookseller, with a generosity not too common, gave Richard a desk in his shop free of charge, at which to write his business letters. Many years afterwards when Alderman White through no fault of his own, was in financial difficulties, Richard Tangye, not

unmindful of his old kindness, came to some purpose to his help. Meanwhile he stayed there until, to quote his own words, "One day my friend's partner said to me, 'Your letters are more than ours, so I think one of us must move.'"

This brought matters to a crisis, and here it is necessary to turn for a moment to what James and Joseph Tangye had been about in the spring of 1857. They were both exceedingly clever and ingenious workmen, and by this time had scraped together a little capital, and seeing their chance, they promptly took it. Joseph was exceptionally skilled with the lathe. The one he worked was the Holtzapffel, and he made it himself before ever he settled in Birmingham, and with it he was able to turn out remarkably good work, of a kind which was rare. Like the rest of his brothers, Joseph did not relish the new partner at Worsdell's; but there is no reason to suppose that this was the moving cause of his departure. He was merely anxious to get on; he probably saw little chance of quick and steady promotion, and so, encouraged by his elder brother James, he quitted his bench, and hired a small workshop, with machine-power attached, at 40 Mount Street. It was quite a little place down an entry and behind a baker's shop, but it was the cradle out of which sprang the Cornwall Works which have made the name of Tangye Brothers familiar and honoured all over the globe.

Joseph's dull little workshop was long afterwards described by Richard as merely a "portion

of a manufacturer's packing-room, into which a revolving shaft projected," which drove his brother's lathe. The whole cost of the premises—rents ruled low in those days—was only four shillings a week. Here for a few months Richard, who was still carrying on his business as a "Merchant," found shelter, when his letters became too many to be any longer addressed to the bookseller's shop. He says that he partitioned off a corner of the place four feet square and that the dividing walls were not even of lath and plaster, but of stout brown paper on a wooden framework. It was a lowly beginning, but he made the best of it, and with results which in due course will appear.

Joseph knew how to make tools, and tools were wanted just then in Birmingham, and, for the matter of that, elsewhere, for the Industrial Revolution, which has altered all the conditions of work, was in progress. He toiled early and late, and with both hands earnestly, and did not miss his reward, making sometimes twenty and even forty shillings a day. Presently James joined him, and ultimately, George, but before the latter arrived on the scene the other three had joined forces, and started as manufacturers on their own account. James Tangye had mechanical genius, Joseph was a practical master of his craft, quick to carry out the ideas of his elder brother, Richard had the commercial instinct in a superlative sense, without which Tangye Brothers would never have emerged from a back street, whilst George—who is now at the head of the concern—from the first

took his full share in many practical directions in the building up of the business. His training in accountancy, combined with aptness for engineering, brought him into closer sympathetic relation with Richard than those with mere mechanical skill. To their credit let it be said, they never sought orders from any of the customers of the shop which they had left, even in the hardest days of their struggle. They all kept up their kindly relations with Mr. Worsdell until his death, which happened long after he had retired from business, and they themselves had become rich and famous. Mr. Worsdell used to say with pride—at a time, when to borrow his own expression to his old gardener from Ulverston whom he brought to see the Cornwall Works, “Tangyes make steam-engines as fast as you can grow daisies”—that at least he could take the credit of having brought them all to Birmingham! There is a letter in existence, which Richard Tangye greatly prized, since it told him that his own portrait held a place of honour in the room in which his old master died.

Edward, by this time, was in America; but he came back at the call of the others, and joined the new firm, which began business as “James Tangye and Brothers, Machinists.” They went cautiously to work. They had their vicissitudes at the outset, and they possessed the defects of their qualities. If Richard was too sanguine, some of his brothers were too despondent, but, whether hope filled their sails or depression reigned on the quarter

deck, the stout little ship held on its way, making progress, in calm and storm alike, towards the haven of assured prosperity. Richard took large views. He believed with all his heart, and with good reason, in the inventive powers of his brother James, in the practical skill of Joseph, and in the loyalty and ability in which both of the elder brothers were seconded by Edward and George. Richard was the driving-belt of the concern, the man who secured the markets, and he never claimed to be anything else. "No man," said one who worked by his side for thirty years, "ever saw further through a brick wall than Richard Tangye." It was this power of vision, this tireless and resourceful energy, this audacity of enterprise, which eventually lifted James Tangye and Brothers, Machinists, into their unrivalled position in the engineering world.

When James Tangye and Brothers was fairly started Richard, having won his spurs by his early business journeys to Cornwall, on his own account, became traveller for the new concern. He went far and wide in search of orders, and his happy humour and powers of address stood him in good stead. Here is a story which deserves to be recorded, and all the more since it is possible to tell it in his own words: "In one of my earliest business visits to London, when money was scarce, I was detained a day or two longer than I expected by a procrastinating customer—Mr. Vardon, ironmonger, Gracechurch Street, the direct successor of the father of Dicken's 'Dolly Vardon'—the result being that I

found myself without sufficient money to buy a ticket for Birmingham. Remembering what another 'poor Richard' said, that 'they who go a-borrowing go a-sorrowing,' I decided to walk on towards Birmingham until my stock of money would pay for riding the rest of the way. My pocket was light, and so was my heart, for I had Mr. Vardon's order in my pocket ; so, at a quarter past two o'clock, I started from the General Post Office, and walking over Highgate Hill, like another Richard—Whittington by name—I soon found myself in the neighbourhood of Barnet. It was the evening before the great annual horse fair, held in that town, and the roads were very lively with a motley crowd of the regular attendants of such places. Negro minstrels and others had settled down for the night in the shelter of the hedgerows, some with their legs across the footpath, the more easily to trip up the unwary pedestrian, and rendering the middle of the road a safer route. Passing through Barnet, I reached St. Albans (twenty-one miles) before the shops had been closed, and as I wanted an inexpensive but decent lodging I wondered how I should set about it.

Looking into a stationer's shop-window, I saw a kindly-looking man behind the counter, and so ventured in and bought a sheet of paper and envelope. I then told him what I wanted, and why I was walking to my destination. 'I can send you to the very place you want,' said he, and then proceeded to direct me to a little inn just outside the town, on my route homewards, telling me that before he was

married he lodged at that place for years. ‘You will find the landlady a good old soul,’ he continued; ‘tell her I sent you. You will get a bed for sixpence, and a very nice one, too.’ So on I went, and duly presented myself. The old lady, a motherly body, wearing an old-fashioned cap, like Betsy Prig’s, eyed me closely, but kindly, and showed me my room; it was a small one, but very neat and clean, with what we used to call an ‘elliptical’ bedstead, having blue-and-white dimity curtains. Before going to my room, I spent twopence in bread and cheese, which I took up with me, intending a part for supper and the remainder for an early breakfast. I asked my landlady at what hour in the morning they were stirring, and she said some of them would be up soon after four; so, asking her to be sure to have me called then, I retired, and was soon in a dead sleep. When I awoke, the sun was streaming into the room. I got up with a start, and, to my dismay, found that it was very nearly seven o’clock! I had thought of being miles on my way at that time, and encountering the landlady, told her so. ‘You were looking so tired,’ she said, ‘that I thought the rest would do you good.’ So on I trudged, with my small belongings over my shoulder, passing through Dunstable, where I saw the cottagers sitting at their doors plaiting straw for the famous ‘Dunstable Straw Hats’; and so on towards Leighton Buzzard. On the roadside I came to a little public-house, and feeling very hungry, I overcame my remaining stock of prejudice against such

houses, and, walking in, asked for a basin of bread and milk. I had an excellent meal for threepence, and went on my way refreshed.

“At a small railway station I saw a first-class carriage on a siding, and, seeing no one about, ventured to get in it, and had a fine sleep; but hearing a bell ring, I hastily got out of the carriage only half awake, and going up to the ticket office, amazed the clerk by asking if the ‘*teachers had gone to supper?*’ Before I had finished the question I was very much awake, for I discovered I was in a sort of nightmare, and was fancying I was still a junior pupil-teacher at Sidcot School, and that the bell I had heard was the nine o’clock signal for the senior teachers going to their supper and for my retirement to my bed! Leaving the ticket office, I resumed my journey, expecting every moment to feel a hand on my shoulder, and to be detained as an irresponsible wanderer, or a trespasser on the company’s property. Never in all my life, before or since, have I so clearly realised how very near I was to being a ‘tramp.’ Soon after this adventure I found I had enough money with which to complete my journey by rail.

“I thoroughly enjoyed my long walk and have always looked back upon it with much pleasure. I was certainly very hungry before I had finished it, having had only one really good meal on my way. That meal was made from a dish that I will never again partake of. The first slice was most satisfactory, causing me, like the renowned

Oliver Twist, to ask for more, the result being that, when I rose from the table, I registered a vow that never again would I be induced to partake of cold bullock's heart. In walking along the great highroads, that used to be full of stirring life before the era of railways, I was struck with the prevailing solitude; great inns closed, with their windows boarded up, the broad roadway grass-grown in the middle. 'Ichabod' was written upon everything, for the glory had departed. Since then, however, the unknown inventor of the bicycle has wrought a wonderful revolution, and the highroads and remote villages have again become instinct with life."

He used to say that in the early days of the business, when the capital was but small, it was imperative to obtain prompt payment for goods supplied to their customers, and that as a matter of fact they were usually paid every week. "One of our customers, who was not considered to be very 'strong' financially, used to resent my weekly calls. He was a somewhat choleric man, short and podgy, with red hair, and a retreating forehead. On Saturday, on making my appearance as usual, Mr. V. said, 'Mr. Tangye, you are like death; you are sure to come!' I pleaded our young and fast-growing business and want of capital. 'Oh, well,' he exclaimed, 'poverty is no crime, Mr. Tangye.' 'No,' I replied, 'but it is very inconvenient.' Our caution was justified, for not long afterwards that particular customer failed in business." All the

brothers were teetotalers, as their parents had been before them, and, from the first, they resolutely refused to adopt what was then the customary habit of discussing business to the clink of glasses, though they were told that they would come to grief, unless they fell into line in this direction.

It was a hard struggle, and it needed the whole five at the ropes; but brains and pluck and skill, linked, as they were, to integrity, are sure to tell, and presently the good ship got into deep water, and, though storms had still to be confronted, as we shall presently see, it rose above them, and the rest was plain sailing in the sunlit sea of success.

CHAPTER V

THE RISING TIDE OF FORTUNE

A turning-point—Isambard Brunel—Hydraulic jacks for launching the Great Eastern—"She launched us"—"Great events from little causes"—A new workshop—At the Friends' Adult School—Masters and men—Anxious moments—Hardening effect of prosperity—A clear view of responsibility—Litigation over the differential pulley block—Building new premises—His marriage, and the charm of his home.

THERE is a tide in the affairs of men—whether it leads on to fortune depends upon themselves. It came suddenly one dark winter's night to "James Tangye and Brothers, Machinists." Richard was bending over his desk when some one stumbled up the ill-lighted lane, and rung the bell of the little workshop off Mount Street. When the door was opened the stranger looked in at the place and seemed disconcerted and, apologising for having made a mistake, turned abruptly away. Perhaps the visit meant business, and there was not too much of it about just then to miss any possible chance. "Whose place are you looking for, sir?" said Richard. "Tangyes'," was the response, and he

was quickly ushered into the office four feet square. If he had gone away that night in the dark a great opportunity might have been lost ; as it was, his visit meant the turning-point in the fortunes of the new firm. But this statement requires explanation.

James and Joseph Tangye, in the days when they were still working in uncongenial surroundings in Cornwall, had attracted the notice of no less remarkable a man than Isambard Brunel, one of the most brilliant engineers of modern times. He was the first to apply the screw to large ships, though Robert Fulton, an American engineer, was the pioneer of the movement for propelling vessels by steam. Brunel had seen and admired an ingenious hydraulic press, which the Tangyes had made when they were both workmen in a safety fuse factory in their native county. Brunel was now at the height of his career as engineer to the Great Western Railway. He had a keen eye for capacity wherever he found it, and hearing that James Tangye had patented an important improvement in the hydraulic lifting jack, which Joseph Bramah invented, had sent the stranger, who was his agent, to inquire about it. Science and speed were already beginning to work together in a manner which had led people to say that distance was annihilated, and Isambard Brunel's name was on every one's lips as the path-finder of quick, victorious travel across the wide Atlantic. He was the first to apply the screw-propeller to steamships, and the first also to suggest a line of

steamers making regular trips from our shores to those of the United States.

When Richard Tangye was still a child, Brunel had launched the Great Western, which had a tonnage twice that of any ship afloat. He followed that success in 1845 by constructing the first large iron ship, which made the long voyage with the screw-propeller instead of the paddle-wheel. But even this, and the construction of docks, bridges, and broad-gauge railways, did not exhaust the boundless energy of this extraordinary man. Like other men of inventive genius, Brunel was not satisfied; he longed for more worlds to conquer, and therefore turned his undivided energies, between the years 1852-8, to the construction of the largest piece of marine architecture ever put together, the famous but ill-fated ship, which became a new wonder of the world and was called the Great Eastern.

There was of course no Suez Canal in those days, and therefore no quick route to the Antipodes. The Eastern Steam Navigation Company wanted a vessel for the trade with Australia, which could make the voyage round the Cape of Good Hope, and carry more passengers and goods than any ship had ever borne before, and at the same time with a hold big enough for all the coal required on the double journey, out and home. It was to meet this demand that Brunel constructed the Great Eastern. Its length was nearly seven hundred feet, its breadth more than eighty, the height of the hull

sixty, whilst its five funnels were a hundred feet high and six feet in diameter. This was the original plan, but it was somewhat modified in the building of the ship which was intended to carry four thousand passengers, besides a crew of four hundred, and a mighty cargo.

The enterprise had reached its final stage when the great engineer, perplexed by the difficulty of launching so gigantic a ship, bethought himself of the Tangyes and the hydraulic jack. The ship was so long that it was impossible to launch her, prow first, at Millwall. There was nothing for it but to get her into the water broadside, with the help of timber cradles sliding on rails, built on a massive wooden erection which was supported by piles driven into the bed of the river. The owners having failed to launch the ship with the ordinary type of jack then in use, turned to the Tangyes, and with the help of James's improved appliance the great task was accomplished.

The huge ship moved three feet, and then stuck fast, to the chagrin of everybody concerned. Various attempts were made during the next month or two to get the Great Eastern into the water; sometimes the vessel moved several feet, and quite as often only a few inches. The Tangyes were right—more hydraulic jacks were needed. Brunel at last realised his mistake, and finally, with the aid of from twenty to twenty-four jacks, the great ship glided into the Thames on January 31, 1858. Richard Tangye used to say that Brunel's order

for hydraulic jacks proved to be the real foundation of their business: "We launched the Great Eastern, and she launched us." The ship cost more than £800,000 and it took upwards of £70,000 to get her from the dockyard to the water.

Shortly after the Great Eastern was launched, when everybody was talking about it, Richard Tangye met on the streets of London a tall and rather consequential Birmingham merchant, who was walking with another gentleman. He was stopped by his fellow townsman, and introduced to the stranger with the words, "This is the man who launched the Great Eastern." He certainly seemed very small for such an exploit, and, nettled at the decidedly sarcastic tone used by the man, who, in the literal sense, looked down upon him, he replied, "Yes, great events from little causes spring," a happy retort, which did not pass unheeded.

Business was now beginning to come rapidly to James Tangye and Brothers, and, in consequence, they were emboldened to take a larger workshop. It was not a spacious place, though an improvement on the one which they had left. The rent, too, was modest; it sounds absurdly so to-day, for it was only ten shillings a week. They also engaged their first workman. They did not want to stand committed to too much, and therefore he was told at the start that all that they could pledge themselves to was a three months' engagement. With that stipulation, the honest fellow was put to work, and he remained with them for nearly half a century.

Presently other men joined him to the number of five or six, and the wheels ran merrily, for orders from far and wide kept the workshop busy.

Whilst Richard scoured the country in search of orders for hydraulic jacks, rope blocks, and rigging screws, and contrived to keep the books when he was not on the road—"My brothers," was his testimony, "often worked sixteen hours out of the twenty-four." They were all determined to get on, and, with such energy, it is not surprising that they succeeded. Richard did not rest even on Sundays in those days. He was a teacher, with William White, in the Friends' Adult Sunday School in Severn Street—one of the earliest and most remarkable efforts to lay hold, in the religious sense, of the working classes of Birmingham. Mr. White was one of the founders of this movement, and for more than half a century was its life and soul. Richard Tangye used to say towards the close of his life that Mr. White's scholars, past and present, could be numbered by the thousands, and all of them belonged to the artisan class. Yet out of their ranks came from time to time town-councillors, magistrates, and members of Parliament, as well as many of the foremost citizens of Birmingham.

Whilst the Tangyes were still in a small way of business, they continued to enlist the respect and goodwill of their workpeople. There was no nonsense about them, and they were far too manly to forget that they themselves had begun with no

capital, beyond brains and energy. So the sense of comradeship was kept to the front; the workman's confidence was evoked, and yet, with all this, the authority, which they did not parade, was duly respected. "My brother George and I," said Richard long afterwards, "being the younger of the five brothers, were always addressed as 'Master George' and 'Master Richard' by the senior workmen." Nearly forty years later, when Richard Tangye was chairman of the Cornwall Works and had been knighted for his public services, nothing pleased him better than to be greeted with the familiar "Good morning, Master Richard," by one of the old workmen, who had been in their employment when the servants of the firm were not more in number than five or six, instead of several thousands.

Richard Tangye was five-and-twenty when the Great Eastern was launched, and from that year may be said to date his vision of the wide possibilities of life to him. He had still some anxious moments in business to face; indeed, he used to say that 1862 was the most difficult year in his life, so far as his fortunes went. The truth was that James Tangye and Brothers grew so rapidly, when once the tide turned, that there was not capital enough in the concern to cope with its ever increasing responsibilities. The strain of all this fell chiefly on Richard, since he represented the department of ways and means. That, however, is to anticipate a story which, it must be borne in mind, is only

indirectly concerned with the growth of a great industry. No estimate of Richard Tangye, as a man, should be made without laying stress on all that he was in the world of commerce, and, much more, all that he did in building up, to assured prosperity, the Cornwall Works. This will leap to light, in outline at any rate, as the present narrative proceeds, but this memoir will have missed its mark should it fail to keep foremost the winning and many-sided personality of one who was tried alike by adversity and prosperity, and proved equal to either fortune, and remained unspoilt by both.

Perhaps it is a hard saying, but experience confirms it, that whilst many a man can possess his soul with fortitude in adversity, and even find in such an ordeal a bracing influence—an incentive to courage, as well as a tax on endurance—comparatively few grow mellow and kindly in prosperity. Wealth seems to make them suspicious, hard, vainglorious. It is a great mark of quality when any one sits lightly to it, and holds it as a trust, something to be shared with others, a talent, in short, for which account must be given. Richard Tangye had his failings; they were of a kind which seem inseparable from self-made men, but they were nothing in the light of the sweetness and strength of his character, and the instinct which led him, as wealth accumulated, to use it to fine issues. He was reading and thinking in those strenuous years of early manhood; he was looking at the world with his own alert eyes and beginning, in tentative

fashion, to take a firm grasp of public questions. He scorned the man who was too busy with his own affairs to take a lively practical interest in the common welfare. He had no patience, then or afterwards, with the selfish mood of those who stand aloof from public demands, and are content to let other people bear the burden of work which has no reward, except the sense of duty done.

Birmingham, with its progressive ideas, its full and ordered life, its fine sense of the claims of public duty, called forth all his powers, and he brought to its manifold activities, as the years went on, the blunt honesty which calls a spade a spade, unfaltering moral courage, and the passion for civic righteousness which was in his blood. He had clean-cut convictions, even in those early days—the uncompromising convictions of a man who was of the people, and for the people, in all that makes for liberty and progress. When comparative leisure and wide social influence came to him in mid-career, he turned them to noble public ends, in a manner which would not have been possible if, in the days of struggle through which he was now passing, he had not been true to the words which he chose as his motto in life—Industry and Uprightness.

There is no need to tell over again the story of the Chancery suit, in which the Tangyes were involved over their purchase of the Weston Differential Pulley Block. It has been told once for all, in realistic and even dramatic detail, by Sir Richard himself in one of the most fascinating chapters of a

book, in which he traces the Rise of a Great Industry. Mr. Weston was a Birmingham man, and had witnessed, whilst living in the United States, the vain attempts to raise a ship which had foundered off a quay at Buffalo. His Differential Pulley, an ingenious apparatus for raising great weights with a minimum expenditure of power, was suggested to him by the primitive Chinese windlass. James and George Tangye, the latter in particular, perfected the idea, and the invention was patented. It proved a great success, and the demand for it became a solid source of revenue. Presently the patent was infringed by a man who professed that Weston's invention had been anticipated thirty years earlier, and declared that he himself had been manufacturing the same apparatus for several years before the patent was granted.

There was no alternative to the Tangyes except to commence an action in the High Court, and the case came before Vice-Chancellor Wood. The trial lasted eight days, and the cost of it strained the resources of the plaintiffs not a little. Before it came on, Richard Tangye received an anonymous letter, telling him that the writer could prove that the defendant's case rested on falsehood and forgery. He followed up the hint which his unknown correspondent had given him, and the man, who had been in the employment of the defendants, confessed all he knew, with the result that the rights of the Weston Pulley were upheld, and the Tangyes, at a cost of some thousands of pounds and a year's anxiety, were

vindicated. Richard Tangye never forgot the strain of that ordeal, or the nervous tension of the long legal proceedings. Always sensitive and highly strung, he nearly collapsed before the trial ended, for the whole responsibility of it rested on him, and he felt that the success or failure of the business itself depended on the verdict.

One hard part of the affair was an attack on the firm's integrity. One witness had the effrontery to state in court that the Tangyes had attempted to bribe him not to appear for the defendant. This slander wounded Richard Tangye to the quick, though short work was made of it in the witness box, and not merely its falsehood but the forgery itself stood exposed. It was a rough experience for a young man, just starting in life, though it all came out well in the end, and the Weston Pulley itself developed into one of the most important assets of the firm.

The business during that anxious time was rapidly extending, so much so, indeed, that the new workshop at ten shillings a week became impossible. It was necessary, therefore, to make a new departure and, for the first time, this spelt bricks and mortar. James Tangye and Brothers, greatly daring, resolved, though not without misgivings, to build new premises in Clement Street, Birmingham. They were all of the same mind about one thing—the new building would be equal to “all future requirements.” But they were mistaken.

Whilst this project was still in process of accom-

plishment, Richard was in a romantic mood. He had fallen in love, and right worthily. But he had to wait for his young bride. His courtship ran smoothly ; it was the question of ways and means, that had to be considered. But, such considerations could not be discarded, especially by young people much in love with each other. He accordingly married Miss Caroline Jesper on January 24, 1859. She was the daughter of Mr. Thomas Jesper, at that time a corn merchant in Birmingham. His fair young bride was a Quakeress, and the young people had hoped to be married at the Friends' Meeting House, Birmingham, but Richard Tangye was not by birth a member of the Society, and had never formally enrolled himself in its ranks, and therefore the old Friends were opposed to the marriage taking place in Quaker fashion. They were accordingly married by the registrar, and Lady Tangye still recalls the solemn little homily which he gave them, for in those days such officials did not adhere rigidly to what the law demands on such occasions. Few men ever made a more happy marriage, or won a bride better qualified in every respect to prove a true helpmeet in all that makes for happiness and honour in such a relation. Men of his sort, diligent in business, fervent in spirit, sympathetic and sensitive, surely need more than others the sanctuary of home. It is enough to say—more cannot indeed well be said—that Richard Tangye gained in such a wife, a new inspiration to all that was best in life, and the home which

she made him remained, through the long years that succeeded, a place of peace, brightened by love and courage, and the scene, when prosperity was fully assured, of ever widening and gracious hospitality.

Glimpses of that home-life, and all that it meant for Richard Tangye, his children, and the friends within his gates, will stand artlessly disclosed in subsequent chapters of this book. It is enough at the moment merely to chronicle an event, which added, far more than any amount of gathered gold could have done, to the happiness and welfare, in every sense, of a man, who was becoming more and more conscious, as the responsibilities of life gathered about him, that he did not live for himself alone. No guest ever visited his home without being impressed by its tranquillity, its wholesome sense of liberty, its cheerful serenity, and it was not difficult to discover where lay the secret of its charm.

CHAPTER VI

STRESS AND PROGRESS

Statesmen after Tangye's own heart—Twenty invitations to enter Parliament—Services to the Liberal Party—Contribution to Cobden's Commercial Treaty with France—Encountering prejudices against new machines—An experience in a bank parlour—Hydraulic shearing machine—The "Cornubia"—Learning at the feet of public men—"Victory and Sebastopol"—Tactful management of customers—Not enslaved by business—Quick decisions—Magnanimous judgments of men.

RICHARD TANGYE, from youth to age, was an ardent politician—a Radical of the old school, having neither part nor lot with the more modern band which coquet ostentatiously with Socialism. The statesmen whom he admired and trusted were Lord John Russell, Gladstone, Cobden, Bright, W. E. Forster, and, across the Atlantic, Abraham Lincoln, after whom he named his eldest son, who was born when all the world was denouncing the cowardly assassination of the great-hearted President of the United States, who abolished the slave trade. These were the men whom he regarded as the true friends of the democracy, and, for the rest, he pinned

his faith to the old watchword of the Liberal Party, —Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform. It is well that so much should be stated at this point of the story, since it defines his position on public questions.

Lord John represented in his eyes the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, and that great landmark in modern progress—the Reform Bill. Gladstone stirred his enthusiasm as the hero of a hundred fights for liberty and progress. Cobden claimed his allegiance, because, more than any one else, he was the champion of Free Trade. Bright was one of his own people, a man whose splendid eloquence was always enlisted on the side of peace and goodwill among the nations. Forster, like Bright, and like himself, had been trained in the Society of Friends, and no one in England rejoiced more than Richard Tangye over at least the main provisions of the Education Act, which will always be linked with his name. Abraham Lincoln, who was cradled in obscurity and rose, self-taught, to be President of the United States, represented, in his eyes, more than the triumph of self-help, since at the height of his power, braving all opposition, he let the oppressed go free.

It needs no effort of imagination to understand how such men conquered the life-long devotion of one, who was not merely the architect of his own fortunes, but had struggled with many disadvantages in life, and was, both by conviction and training, opposed, on the one hand, to political and social injustice,

and, on the other, eager to have a share, however modest, in the redress of acknowledged wrongs, whether at home or abroad.

Here it may be as well to state that Richard Tangye, in the maturity of his powers, had so impressed the public mind that again and again he was asked to stand for Parliament, though he had no ambition of that kind in 1859. Few men ever had more opportunities in that direction, for he declined such an honour on no less than twenty occasions. Why, it may be asked, did he decline such overtures? Partly from the tremendous and unremitting strain of the business of which he was the driving-belt, and still more, perhaps, because his health was never robust. He was, moreover, diffident and even self-distrustful to a degree, which those who knew him only slightly never realised. But he never shirked the battle in Birmingham, and John Bright, in many a critical struggle, had good reason for the implicit confidence with which he honoured him. For the rest, he did yeoman service for the Liberal Party, with voice, pen, and purse, and also bore his full share in the municipal work of a great community, which, in due time, came to regard him as one of its most generous, consistent and fearless public men.

Quite at the outset of his career, in the year 1859, when, as has just been stated, he married, at the age of twenty-six, there occurred an instance of his public spirit. Richard Cobden just then was negotiating a commercial treaty with France, which took effect

in the following year, and was everywhere regarded as one of the first and most memorable triumphs of the policy of Free Trade. Cobden, who was himself a business man, caused it to be made known that he would welcome any practical suggestions, from merchants and manufacturers in England, likely to be of use in shaping the provisions of this great scheme. The old tariff, so far as it related to tools and machinery, abounded in stipulations which handicapped the trade of England. Elaborate drawings, for instance, were demanded, which, apart from their cost, were calmly handed over by the French Customs authorities to the *École des Arts et Metiers* in Paris, so that young French engineers might pick up ideas and exploit them, to the loss of foreign competitors.

Richard Tangye accordingly wrote to Cobden, explaining exactly the manner in which this enactment worked out to the disadvantage of the British market. He received in reply a long letter in the statesman's own handwriting, in which he was thanked for the information, and told that it should receive full attention. When the Commercial Treaty was published in 1860, he had the satisfaction of finding that Cobden had accepted the hint, for one of its articles was as follows :—"The importer of machines or mechanical instruments, complete or in detached pieces, of British origin or manufacture, shall be exempt from the obligation of producing at the French Customs any model or drawing of the imported article." That was Richard

Tangye's first contribution—of not inconsiderable importance, as all manufacturers are aware—to the cause of Free Trade.

Between 1859 and 1862 the business of James Tangye and Brothers grew rapidly, so rapidly indeed that the modest capital of the firm was at times unequal to the strain imposed by work on hand. The inventive genius of James and Joseph was employed in making continual improvements in machinery, but there was a good deal of prejudice to encounter before the new machines could find a place in the market. Sometimes the opposition came from artisans, who imagined that the labour of working men was threatened by such inventions as a machine which cut half a dozen screws at the cost of cutting one by old-fashioned methods. Sometimes the ironmasters of Staffordshire proved incredulous, when a machine was offered to them which one man could work, and which lifted from three to sixty tons, and for a time they would have nothing to do with the Tangye hydraulic jack, preferring to stick to the clumsy old rack-jack, which required four men to work it, and could lift only, at the most, twenty tons. Richard Tangye's powers of persuasion were taxed to the utmost in dealing with such prejudices, even when he was able to give an object-lesson which ought surely to have spoken for itself. Presently, however, the tide turned, and orders flocked in for the new machinery, and did so to such an extent that it was hard to keep pace with the work. "Our order book," is his own

statement, "was full of profitable contracts ; but although we worked almost all night and all day, and never had a holiday, we could not get them out with sufficient despatch."

The workshop in Clement Street which they thought, when first built, was big enough for all possible developments of the business, was already inadequate. More room and more machinery were imperative, if the firm was to cope with the demands which were now made upon it. It was at this juncture that Richard Tangye had his first experience of the bank parlour. He wanted an advance, on behalf of the firm, of £500 ; but the manager was a suspicious, hard old Scotsman. He demanded security for the loan ; it was not enough for him that the 'Tangyes' account, of two or three years' standing, had never been overdrawn. Richard Tangye told him frankly that all their capital was in the business, and hinted that their character for integrity would bear investigation. The workshop was within a few hundred yards of the bank, and the manager was asked to send someone to look at the books, which were full of orders. But all was in vain ; the manager absolutely declined to entertain the proposal. Richard Tangye used to say that, before the interview was over, he came to the conclusion that nether mill-stones were softer than some men's natures. He came out disappointed, but the firm contrived to jog along without seeking help in any other quarter. He called that period the "darkest part of the

night," and was naturally sore to think that the firm could not be trusted for so modest an amount, at a moment when they were embarrassed only by their own success.

It is a long road that has no turning, and presently things began to improve, slowly at first, and then to a marked degree. The sequel of their relations with that bank deserves to be recorded. Before very long the firm had money to invest and they bought shares in the bank which had refused them accommodation, which investment, to say the least, was rather surprising. Twelve months after this purchase they had good reason to regret the transaction, for the bank came down with a crash, and the shares were waste paper.

Still they kept pegging away, and the business kept growing. James Russell Lowell once declared that the two sources of literary inspiration were a full head and an empty pocket. Perhaps the same thing is true with regard to mechanical inventions. Anyhow, under the spur of necessity, the brains of the Tangyes kept moving. There was little that they did not attempt in the way of improved machinery, and there was much in which they succeeded, in some cases far beyond their own anticipations. One of their greatest successes was their hydraulic shearing machine, which proved its utility by cutting a piece of cold iron nine inches by six inches. It weighed twenty-four tons, and the pressure which it brought into play was equal to a thousand. It was made, in the first instance, for

the Russian Government, and attracted wide attention both at home and abroad.

Road locomotives and traction engines are common enough to-day—too common indeed for the peace of the pedestrian—but in the early sixties they were unknown, and when the Tangyes turned their attention in that direction they quickly found themselves in sharp conflict with public opinion. They constructed a road locomotive, and, as they were loyal Cornishmen, called it the “Cornubia.” It could travel twenty miles an hour, and could carry ten people, and was intended to link up outlying country places to the railways. The machinery was simple, the engine was easily managed, and they had good reason to believe, from the public interest in the invention, that they had, as the Americans say, struck oil. But the landed gentry took alarm; they were afraid their horses would kick the traces, and the matter was brought before the attention of Parliament. The result was that an act was passed forbidding any machine to proceed along the high roads at more than four miles an hour; even then it was not to proceed unless a man walked in front, armed with a red flag, for the delectation of approaching cattle.

The upshot of all this was that the new method of quick transit was, for thirty years, “strangled in its cradle,” as Richard Tangye put it, though he lived to see a new order of things, with motor-cars flying about the country in all directions in pursuit of trade or pleasure. All things come round to

those who will but wait. The pity, so far as the Tangyes were concerned, was that the "Cornubia" was many years in advance of its times.

Birmingham was just the place for a young man of the quick and eager mind of Richard Tangye. There was plenty of stir in its streets, and on its platforms. All the great questions at issue, political, social, and economic, came up for discussion in its crowded, strenuous life. If a man was not in the movement of public affairs in that busy community, the fault surely lay at his own door. Birmingham, like Manchester, took itself seriously, and no challenge to the public spirit of the community, passed unheeded. It had come to its heritage of power with the great upheaval in trade which mechanical progress had brought about. Its keen, hard-headed merchants and artisans thought for themselves, and, what is more, they had the courage of their convictions. Richard Tangye, in due time, took his full share in all this activity, for men of character and capacity have responsibilities thrust upon them, whether they are ambitious or not of public life.

In the years when the business was in the making, and he, too, was in the making, in the public sense, he dipped impulsively, here and there, into the discussion of public questions. But he did so tentatively, desiring to be quite sure of himself—feeling his way, as it were, in directions which had nothing to do with the work in hand, except in that large and honourable sense, which sooner or later makes its

own resistless appeal to all men who care, in any real sense, for the general good of the community. Great speakers came to Birmingham occasionally on one public errand or another, and perhaps the best part of their success was not the passing of some resolution, amid tumultuous applause, in crowded gatherings, but the liberal education which their presence gave to younger men, who listened to their arguments, and were fired by their oratory. Richard Tangye, like many another man who did excellent service in after years to Birmingham, was not yet on the platform on these occasions, but in the back of the hall, or in some distant gallery. An eager learner, as well as listener, he gained new ideas and an incentive to public work, which were to bear fruit to some purpose when he came to the full maturity of his powers.

There were concerts too, and some of them were memorable. Here is a reminiscence of one of them which it is possible to give in his own words :—
“ It was on the evening when the news of the capture of Sebastopol came to Birmingham that Sims Reeves was singing at a concert at the Town Hall, at which I was present. The first intimation of the great news came from the vocalist himself. He was singing a song, the name of which I have forgotten ; but the last words of the final line contained the same number of syllables as the word Sebastopol, so he substituted it for them, and when he sang the line ‘ Victory and Sebastopol,’ which he did with marvellous effect, the enthusiasm with which it

was received can easily be imagined. Needless to say he was encored over and over again, the vast audience upstanding while he sang."

The developments of the firm at this period were so numerous, and Richard Tangye was so much on the road, travelling from place to place in its interests, that his old task as book-keeper passed into other hands. It was more important to secure orders than to cast up accounts, and, in spite of his constitutional shyness, his kindliness, tact, and ready wit opened doors that might otherwise have been closed. He learned that there were two kinds of customers—the people who like to do all the talking themselves, and those who scarcely utter a word, but listen attentively to all that is said to them. He always allowed loquacious people to have the first word, even if they followed it up with a multitude. Then when they had at last come to an end, he tried adroitly to bring them to business. Taciturn people, on the other hand, naturally drew forth all his powers of persuasion, and, since the machinery which he had to sell spoke for itself, as a rule he succeeded in obtaining good orders. All this experience in dealing with people taught him self-reliance, and stood him in good stead as the business grew to proportions which were enough to try to the utmost the natural resources of any man.

He determined from the start that, whether the firm succeeded or failed, he would never allow the claims of business to grind the soul out of him.

Young as he was, he had seen men succeed at the cost of all that was best in themselves. They had sunk, not only all their capital, but all their interests in life, in the effort to get on, in the material sense. They had succeeded in amassing wealth, but their own characters had grown warped and unlovely in the process. Outward prosperity had been won, but at the cost of a hard, restless, suspicious old age. He was resolved to follow a more excellent way. Business success was all very well, but, if the price to be paid for it was the surrender of a man's ideals, he declined to entertain it. He determined therefore to keep his soul alive, and not to become a mere slave of the machine, even if the slave drove to it in a carriage and pair. So he warmed both hands at the fire of life, and, whilst diligent in business, was fervent in spirit, cultivating the best part of himself in such scanty leisure as lay outside the daily round. It is a great thing for a man to come to such a resolution, and to have the grace to keep it, through all the strain of exacting cares and widening responsibilities; it spells salvation.

In a very real sense he was immersed in business; nothing escaped him, down to the minutest detail of the workshop; but he had interests apart from it, political and philanthropic, modest enough as yet, but equally real. This it was that saved the situation. Without such interests he would probably have grown rich, for there was money in the Tangye brains, his own, and, perhaps still more, those of his elder brothers. As it was he

succeeded without the grim tragedy of leanness of soul.

His judgment, even at that time, was a valuable asset to the firm. He had a remarkable power of coming to a quick decision on any matter of business, however complicated, which was put before him. He would listen attentively to all that was said, and then, saying "stop a minute," would take a few quick, nervous strides up and down the room, and come to a decision, which he had the faculty of expressing in pithy, incisive terms. He would balance the evidence that was put before him, sum it all up on both sides, and draw from it a conclusion which, when once stated, seemed inevitable. "There is only one course to pursue," was his method of beginning, when he had mastered the facts, and the method which he suggested, in nine cases out of ten, proved to be correct. He would himself have been at a loss, not unfrequently, to explain the process by which he arrived at his decision. But he had no reason to revise his conclusions.

There were times when he was somewhat too sanguine, for he was always an optimist, though with shrewd limitations, and, occasionally, his magnanimous judgments of men were not justified, but that was the fault of his quality, and, to the credit of human nature, let it be said, it was only seldom that he had reason to regret the trust which he placed in it. When he believed a man to be both capable and reliable in business, Richard Tangye

always gave him his chance of responsibility and authority. He might be young and comparatively untried ; but if his record was good as far as he went, he was quickly given an opportunity for showing what was in him, on a broader scale. That was the secret that attached men to Richard Tangye—the sense that he respected their manhood and relied on them to do their best.

CHAPTER VII

THE CORNWALL WORKS

New works at Soho—A bold advertisement—The Special Steam Pump—Results of incivility—Opening of works in Belgium—British and Belgian workmen compared—London warehouse—Branches in the north and the colonies—Richard Tangye's administrative powers—Relations with workpeople—Dr Dale's testimony—Richard Tangye's humour.

YEAR by year the business of Tangye Brothers increased in magnitude. In the early sixties the partners felt compelled to provide larger premises, little dreaming that their business, though so flourishing, was a very modest undertaking compared with the position it afterwards assumed, for, twenty years later, it was destined to take rank with the greatest manufacturing firms of the United Kingdom. In 1862 the Clement Street workshops were clearly inadequate, and a new departure became imperative. Land at Soho, three miles from Birmingham, in close proximity to the historic foundry of Boulton and Watt, was therefore acquired, and in the course of the following year the Cornwall Works came into existence.

The Tangyes were proud to associate the name of their native county with their own success. It is not too much to say in this connection that the Cornwall Works, where the fortune of the family was made, became in process of time, what it remains to-day, renowned in engineering circles all over the world. The Tangyes were already so well established that they were in a position to retain the Clement Street workshop as a centre of their operations in Birmingham. In a comparatively short time the Cornwall Works, Soho, were completed. They covered three acres of land, and were provided with all the machinery and plant necessary—for the time at least—to carry on the business without strain. The new workshops were insignificant compared with those which exist to-day, but the Tangyes had the business foresight to secure enough additional land for subsequent developments. As soon as these new engineering sheds had been erected work was found for four hundred men—the forerunners of a great industrial army which was destined on that spot to find no lack of employment in the years to come. The Cornwall Works are near two great lines of railway which converge on Birmingham—the Great Western and the London and North-Western—and it was a proud day for Richard Tangye when the long, external walls of the new property were duly labelled, in letters six feet high, “Cornwall Works, Tangye Brothers, Hydraulic Engineers.”

He used to tell a good story of the manner in

which he was chaffed, shortly afterwards, in a chance encounter with the leading engineer of the town, who, meeting him in New Street said, "I see you are in full swing in your new works, Mr. Tangye"; and then added, with just a touch of sarcasm, "By the way, what very tall letters you have put your name up in. I should say they are taller than yourself." "Yes," was the reply, "they are almost double my height!" Some time later he met the same gentleman again, who exclaimed, "I say! I hear you have got that Yankee pump to manufacture, and that you are making a good thing out of it." Then he added, "It was offered to us, but we could not see anything in it. How did you get it?" "Well," was the response, "we got it by those same letters which you thought were so absurdly tall."

How this came about deserves to be recorded. The pump in question was the invention of Mr. A. S. Cameron, of New York, and nothing of the kind was known at that time in this country, though it has since made its own welcome all over the world as the "Special" Steam-Pump. Its merit lay in its simplicity, its strength and small compass, and the manner in which it did away with the necessity for a fly-wheel, and the extraneous gearing which was then in vogue. There was wealth for himself and others under Mr. Cameron's hat, when the train, in which he was travelling from Manchester, came to a halt to collect tickets just outside Birmingham. During the lull in the journey, his eye caught the

big letters, about which Richard Tangye had been bantered, and, like Captain Cuttle, he made a note of them. Presently he stood in the streets of Birmingham a disappointed man, though in his pocket there was still a packet of letters as yet undelivered, which contained introductions to nearly all the leading engineers throughout the country. The reason he was disappointed was not a substantial one, except perhaps to a sensitive man of brains.

When Mr. Cameron landed at Liverpool he made his way at once to Manchester in order to call at, let us say, the works of Messrs. A. and B., that he might give them the first offer for England for his patent. It chanced that a pert, consequential young clerk was the first person he encountered when he went into the office. This youth was in no hurry to attend to him, but, after a while, condescended to turn round on his stool to greet the stranger with the single word, "Well!" "I guess I want Mr. A.," said the inventor. "Mr. A.?" said the clerk with a sneer. "I guess Mr. A. has been dead these ten years." The American, quick as a flash, came to his own conclusions. Whether they were correct or not is a point that need not be here discussed; it is enough to state that they were at least sufficient for him. He said to himself, "No sensible firm would tolerate such a boor as that," and, arguing from the less to the greater, without more ado, turned on his heel.

He had not been long in Birmingham before he remembered the mental note which he had made when the train stopped for the collection of tickets. Though he had no letter in his pocket to Tangye Brothers—for they at that time were little known across the Atlantic—he determined to make his way to the Cornwall Works.

There he met James Tangye, who was at once impressed by the extreme ingenuity and utility of the invention. The visitor himself was also impressed by the quickness with which his idea was grasped, and the keen knowledge of mechanical methods which came to light, even in a short conversation. Presently, taking out of his pocket a packet of letters of introduction to other firms, he tore them all up where he stood, exclaiming, “I guess I’ll go no further. This pump is the identical thing for you, and I guess you are the very people for the pump, and take my word for it there’s lots of money in it.” It did not take long to draw up an agreement, for that was the sort of man with whom the Tangyes liked to do business. They had no reason to regret their prompt decision, for Richard afterwards declared that they made a big harvest out of the English rights for the invention, and, whilst the patent lasted, the man who made them that impulsive offer was paid by them no less a sum than £35,000 in royalties. “Young men,” he used to say in recounting the incident, “you can talk very glibly about how much the master makes out of your labour, but only rarely do you take into

account how much he sometimes loses, and—all for the want of a little civility.” That clerk in Manchester, on the other hand, did a very good bit of business that day, though not for the people who paid his wages, but for the newly-established Cornwall Works. The six-foot letters on the exterior wall, Richard Tangye always said, had justified their existence as the best advertisement which the firm had ever drawn up.

Orders for machinery were now coming in from various parts of Europe, not to the Tangyes alone, but more or less to all the engineering firms in the country. This led, in 1863, to a visit to the Continent of some prominent English ironmasters, who went thither to find out for themselves exactly what was most wanted, and were a little surprised to discover to what an extent their foreign rivals were beginning to develop engineering activities on their own account. They came back in rather a depressed mood, making no secret of their fears that the Belgians in particular were going to forestall British goods in continental markets. Alarm was expressed on every hand at the prospect of a diminished demand, and the Tangyes, yielding to these apprehensions, determined to take time by the forelock by opening works in Belgium.

Edward Tangye accordingly took charge of this new venture. The necessary machinery was despatched, and with it went a few picked workmen, sufficiently skilled to direct the labour of the rank and file. “My son,” said a shrewd old Quaker

to a friend of Richard Tangye's, who told him of the new works, "never put salt water between thee and thy money." If that counsel of perfection were followed, there would, of course, be an end to all great ventures in business ; but it is one which beginners—often impulsive and not a little sanguine—might with advantage bear in mind. Anyhow, the Tangyes proved the wisdom of it up to the hilt. The Belgian Works did not prosper ; perhaps it was just as well there should have been a momentary ebb in the tide of success, for a slight check, even if it does bring disappointment, calls out the quality of people and braces their powers. It is not easy for English manufacturers, especially when, like the Tangyes, they have had no previous experience of the widely different economic and social conditions which prevail on the Continent, to be masters in their own house, when they suddenly elect to establish one abroad. They quickly found that though the scale of wages demanded was much less, the foreign artisan did not possess the stamina of the working men employed in Birmingham. He might be content with smaller wages, but, even when that was taken fully into account, his power of manual skill was so inferior that the outcome of his toil was inadequate, though, it is only fair to add, there has been much improvement in later years. Richard Tangye used to say that, however it may be now, in those days three Belgians, busy all day in the workshop, did not get through more work than one Englishman. The Tangyes

were not the men to relinquish the experiment without due trial, so they took over more of their Birmingham workpeople, and did not break up the establishment until the hard logic of figures had proved to them that the cost of production was unremunerative. Then, like sensible men, they cut the loss, and abandoned Belgium once for all, so far as the actual work of manufacture was concerned. It taught them one thing, and that was not to be afraid of foreign rivalry.

Soon after this the Tangyes came to the conclusion that it would be much better to have a warehouse in London, than workshops in Belgium. It is the laudable and sensible ambition of every thriving business, which makes more than a local appeal, to be represented in the capital. London, apart from its own myriad enterprises and all the opportunities which they offer to energy and capacity, is a place of call for all the buyers of the world, and to have no foothold in its crowded streets is therefore a disadvantage too obvious to need pointing out to people who had “power” to sell, to borrow the simile of a great engineer. Accordingly to London, in 1868, Richard Tangye went to open a warehouse in one of its crowded thoroughfares, in the interests of the Cornwall Works. This new departure was rendered imperative by like forward movements on the part of rivals in the trade, and not less by the growing disinclination of customers, on the small and great scale, to do business with mere agents, not always too well informed about the

merits of the wares, in the shape of machinery, which they had to offer. He remained in London—flying down to the Cornwall Works continually when anything important was on hand—for five strenuous years, and when he went back to Birmingham in 1872 the business was not only firmly established, but had been quadrupled in that period. Here it may be well to state that, gradually, at other centres of trade, first in England, and then across the sea, other houses were established in the interests of the Cornwall Works. One of them was at Newcastle-on-Tyne, another at Manchester, then Scotland was invaded, with Glasgow as the centre of operations, and in later years, Sydney, Melbourne, New York and Johannesburg were annexed. By this time the elder brothers had retired from the business, and responsibility for the Cornwall Works rested on the shoulders of Richard and George, and their relations became more intimate, if possible, than at any previous stage of their lives. There are, in existence, many letters which passed between them, and they show that Richard's return to headquarters was eagerly desired by his younger brother, and he himself also felt that this was the best course to pursue.

When Richard Tangye came back to Birmingham, with all the strings of the London connection in his quick, eager hands, there were problems to be confronted. The Cornwall Works had not in any sense stood still in the interval. It was already a great hive of industry, with an army of workpeople

and far-reaching activities, with knotty questions to solve, moreover, the outcome of the complex organisation which had inevitably arisen with the growth of the concern. Richard Tangye had grown in business aptitude, in social vision, and, not least, in the determination to order the affairs of the business, so far as in him lay, on broad and progressive lines. He had seen more of the world than his partners, had less of the provincial note, and though, on his own confession, not worthy, then or afterwards, to hold a candle to his elder brothers on the mechanical side, was able not merely to grasp, but to settle, complicated matters of administration, with which the rest were powerless to deal. He knew his limitations—a great thing for any one to know—and being, then and always, a perfectly frank as well as sincere man, he never attempted to hide them. But one thing else he knew, and that supported, as he was, by the loyalty of his younger brother, was that he could order the affairs of the Cornwall Works with discretion, and with a generous regard of the workpeople. Happily, the free hand he needed was not disallowed. He had his chance, and he took it, and, let it be said, he builded better than he knew. He never forgot his own hard struggle, and because the workpeople knew that he kept it in mind, and was never in the least ashamed of it into whatever company he might be thrown, he had their implicit confidence.

His triumph—it was a real and worthy one—was, in short, the triumph of personality. The men

felt instinctively that he had struggled from the ranks and understood them, and that, under the broad-cloth of the master, there beat a heart quite as manly, independent, and kindly as any man in fustian could claim. In all this he had the co-operation of his younger brother, who also possessed the goodwill of the workpeople and a wide grasp of mechanical operations—as all who know him are aware. It was this union of forces that made the affairs of the Cornwall Works advance steadily and with ever-widening success. Sympathetic imagination, and the delicacy and consideration for others to which it leads, when not untrammelled by hard worldly maxims, is itself an unusual quality. There is so little of it about, as a ruling force in the relations of capital and labour, that when it does not appear spasmodically, but is the ruling principle of a man's life, it seldom fails, to the credit of humanity, to pass unrecognised.

Richard Tangye knew the artisans at the Cornwall Works in a very real sense, and they knew him too. He could be imperative, stern, and, on occasion, autocratic, but he was just, considerate, and generous. There was friction, of course, now and then, for men are but human, but, broadly speaking, the relations of the firm with those who served it, from the most responsible capacity down to the lowest, ran almost as smoothly as any of the countless wheels in the Works.

Dr. R. W. Dale, of Carr's Lane Chapel, was one of Richard Tangye's intimate friends, and a man to

whom he owed not a little, first and last, in the direction both of moral and civic inspiration. This preacher and platform speaker, and valiant, righteous man—who was a sort of incarnate conscience in Birmingham—once made a remark which deserves here to be regarded. He said in a letter to Richard Tangye, on the latter leaving Birmingham once for all, when the long strain of his active life was over—“I regret your removal on personal as well as public grounds. You have done great things for Birmingham. Your gifts have been distinguished by a princely generosity—if, indeed, princes in these days have any right to furnish an epithet for generosity—like yours.” Then he added, and this is the reason why that kindly letter is here anticipated: “But I appreciate not less highly your administration of the great works at Soho. I have not yet been able to unlearn my old economics, and to attribute all the glory of our industrial triumphs to the workmen. That seems as unreasonable as it would be to attribute the glory of Waterloo—if your friendly instincts will forgive the illustration—to Tommy Atkins, and to deny any share of it to the Duke of Wellington. You have given a great example of what a man can do for the prosperity and happiness of his people.” That was a high tribute from such lips, and no wonder the letter was treasured by the man who received it, and yet it would not be difficult to add much else to the same purpose. Its value lies in the fact that Dr. Dale was not given to compliments, but he had a unique

knowledge both of masters and men in Birmingham. He had, moreover, a thousand opportunities of gauging accurately public opinion in the great community, which turned to him instinctively as a trusted and courageous leader on all matters which were bound up with the prosperity of the Midlands, or with the honour of England itself.

Half the charm of Richard Tangye, honesty and courage apart, sprang out of his modesty and humour. The first was sometimes challenged but never by any one who really knew the man. When it was questioned, that arose from the fact that he had nothing to conceal. In letters to the papers and in speeches on the platform, he was outspoken, expansive, and occasionally, let it be admitted, oracular, to a degree that took people, of more sophisticated and calculating minds, aback. But at the heart of him he was perfectly unassuming, frank and natural, to an extent which in these days is rare. No one ever challenged his humour; it was perennial and kindly. He had quick eyes for the ludicrous aspect of things, and few men excelled him in the power to bring out at the right moment, in public speech or fireside talk, a racy story. He not only knew when to bring it out, but how, if the need arose, to point its moral. He was one of those people who, go where they will, instinctively heighten the gaiety of mankind. He was quick and witty in retort, and, when at his ease in congenial company, there seemed no end to the amusing stories which he had to tell. Many of them were

told in the vernacular, for he was a capital mimic, and those which delighted him most threw into relief the shrewd kindliness and outspoken, if disconcerting, candour of Cornish folk. Sometimes he seemed tongue-tied and embarrassed, and then he grew silent. That only happened, however, when the people, into whose company he was at the moment thrown, were formal, self-conscious, unimaginative. The wells of fancy and recollection were frozen when those about him did not relish laughter, and were impervious to a joke. If a good man cannot laugh in this dull world, who else, in the name of all that is sacred, has a right to do so ?

CHAPTER VIII

CONSIDERATION FOR WORKPEOPLE

Tyneside struggle between capital and labour—Richard Tangye averts a strike in Birmingham—Nine-hours day granted unasked—Holding wealth as a trust—Conscience and kindness in the workshop—Dining-hall for workmen—Evening classes—Benefit Fund—Dr. Langford's addresses—Lifting Cleopatra's Needle—Rapid progress in methods of weight-raising—Results achieved by the Hydraulic Jack.

THE year 1872, in which Richard Tangye returned to Birmingham, was, in many respects, a memorable one, and not least in regard to the relations of capital and labour. It witnessed a great strike on Tyneside for the nine-hours day, a movement which, it was predicted, meant the beginning of a new era in the mechanical workshops of England. Opinions ran high on both sides during the protracted struggle, and great loss was incurred through idle machinery before the question at issue was settled. Richard Tangye felt from the outset that the claim of the men was just. The success that had followed the concession of a half-day's holiday at the end of the week, which the Tangyes, at his suggestion, had been the first to adopt, convinced him that this

further boon to the workpeople might well be conceded. He had seen for himself how the energies of the men flagged towards the close of the day, with the result, as he put it, that comparatively little work was done in the last hour. Moreover, there was the cost of gas and coals, and the wear and tear of the machinery, to very little purpose, to consider, and all this led him to think that the proper course to pursue was to forestall an agitation on the subject by granting, unasked, in the workshops of Birmingham, what the artisans of Newcastle had won at the cost of a ruinous dislocation of business.

During the critical months when the struggle in the north was proceeding, he was powerless to act in the matter, in consequence of a severe illness of several months. But, during these long weeks of enforced idleness, he was turning the matter over in his mind, and becoming more and more restive at the apathy which existed in the Midlands. He saw that the Newcastle artisans were fighting a battle, not for themselves alone, but for the rights of labour in all the workshops of the nation. He sympathised with them, and knew perfectly well that the tide of battle would quickly turn on Birmingham. As soon as he was sufficiently well, he placed himself in communication with his brothers, and, to his great satisfaction, found that they were in complete agreement with him as to the necessity of prompt and generous action.

There was no time to be lost, for the agitation,

though it had not reached the Cornwall Works, was already beginning elsewhere in the district. So he met some of the chief manufacturers of the neighbourhood, and explained to them his views of the situation, with the hope of securing concerted action. He was at once confronted with all sorts of objections, the gist of which was that the trade of the district would be ruined. His reply was characteristic. He said that when whirlwinds were about, it was better to ride and direct them, than to stand still and be overwhelmed by them, and added that, at the Cornwall Works, it was proposed to take occasion by the hand by granting the concession before it was asked. The men had not solicited the firm in any way, but the Tangyes were determined to be in the van of the nine-hours movement in the Midlands. Richard Tangye tried to persuade the assembled manufacturers that it would be unpolitic and unfortunate to take up an attitude of stubborn resistance, for the tide of public opinion, whether they realised it or not, was running strongly, and was not to be set aside by mere authority.

Richard Tangye was the last man to attach much credit to such a decision. He knew the change was inevitable. He believed that justice lay on the side of the workmen, that there would be no real loss to the masters, and, therefore, in view of all this, he came to the conclusion that it was not merely just, but expedient, to give way gracefully before any angry clamour began. He told the masters that, as they were not prepared to do any-

thing at the moment, his own firm now felt perfectly free to follow its own judgment.

Next day the gates were locked on the assembled workpeople, without their knowledge, and presently, to their surprise, some little time before the usual shrill whistle of the factory sounded, which set them free in the middle of the day, they heard the call to cease work. The message ran round the benches that they were to assemble in the largest of the workshops. Without any waste of words, though with a happy allusion to the good relations which had always existed between masters and men at the Cornwall Works, the gathering of between seven and eight hundred men had the following scheme submitted to them.

“We propose the present system to continue until the expiration of this year. From January 1, until June 30, the hours of labour to be fifty-six; from July 1, to be fifty-four hours per week—made up as under:—The fifty-six hours to be as follows, from January 1 to June 30, commencing at 6 A.M., and leaving off at 5.30 P.M.; on Saturdays from 6 A.M. to 12.30 P.M. The fifty-four hours to be as follows:—From July 1, from six A.M. to 5 P.M.; on Saturdays from 6 A.M. to 1 P.M.; the breakfast-time to be half an hour, and dinner time to be one hour in each case. Starting-time allowances to be done away with; the whistle to blow five minutes before, and at the hour for commencing work, when the gates will be closed. Morning late arrivals: The gates to be closed between 7.15 and

breakfast time ; instead of being checked by the half-hour as at present, the quarter-of-an-hour checking to come into force."

There was a short and cordial discussion, and then, on behalf of the workmen, was carried, with acclamation, the following resolution :—" We accept the terms offered to us by our employers with right goodwill, seeing they were made without any pressure being exerted."

A few days later a second meeting was held, and a further concession was voluntarily granted. That night the workmen paraded the streets, with a band of music, headed by a banner, on which was boldly printed the words, " Nine hours given, without asking, by Tangye Brothers." After that the opposition of the other masters collapsed like a house of cards, and there was no strike at Birmingham.

It was said in the local press at the time that the only pressure to which the Tangyes had yielded was the noble pressure of the sense of right. The workmen, too, let it be added, came forward on their side in response to the pressure of right. Richard Tangye used to relate with pride that, though the majority of the men were piece-workers, they " immediately and spontaneously offered to continue at the same prices as before ;" and he added that this generous response was in itself a guarantee against practical loss to the firm.

It was an admirable thing to act promptly, and by doing so to prevent, what might easily have proved, a dead-lock in production. It bore ex-

cellent fruit, moreover, by the manner in which it was done, and strengthened the goodwill and co-operation which had always existed between the Tangyes and their workpeople. Looking back many years later, Richard Tangye saw no reason to regret that decision. He felt that, even if such a course were possible, it would be disastrous to go back to the old system. Since then much has happened, of course, in the world of labour, for the growth of Trade Unions and direct representation in Parliament has strengthened the workmen's position; amongst other improvements of their lot, another hour a day has been struck off the limits of their toil. But that does not lessen the claims of men who were amongst the first to recognise, in so practical a way, the justice of such demands.

Here it may be as well to describe, once for all, the practical consideration for their workpeople which first made the name of Tangye an honoured household word with the artisans of Birmingham. There is no merit attached to the mere provision of work, for that is only an application of the law of supply and demand. The merit comes into view when workpeople are not regarded as mere hands, to which tasks are allotted and wages paid for value received, but as men with claims of another sort on those who employ them—claims which are not to be reckoned by pounds, shillings and pence. Richard Tangye always realised that he was sailing in the same boat as the workpeople, and all through his business relations, without any loss of the only

dignity which is worth having, he cultivated the sense of comradeship. When his life was ending, he said that he had always tried to hold his wealth as a trust, for which he would have to give an account, and, when it began to grow, the first to benefit by it were his own people. They had the first claims, he felt, since they had helped to make it. He busied himself therefore—loyally supported, needless to say, by his brothers—in all sorts of schemes for the welfare and advancement of the workpeople. This was all the more creditable, since the direct claims of the work itself were constant and exacting ; but he found time, notwithstanding, to carry his conscience, and with it his kindness, into the workshop.

One or two instances may be cited as typical instances of such consideration. They are broad examples, it is true, which concerned the mass of men employed, since, to cite personal instances, especially where accident or misfortune made an individual appeal, is impossible, for they were countless.

When the Cornwall Works were first established the artisans followed the practice, which was almost universal at that time, of taking their meals in the workshop. The chief drawback to this custom was that it hindered the ventilation of the place, especially when, as was the case in 1876, the number of men employed had grown in the course of a few years from eight hundred to fifteen hundred. It was therefore resolved to build a dining-hall, in

which breakfasts and dinners for those who brought them could be cooked for a penny a week, and a good mid-day meal could be had for sixpence. But here class-distinctions came into play, for they exist not merely amongst those who neither toil nor spin, but also in the ranks of labour. Some of the men did fine work, over which they scarcely soiled their fingers, and they raised objections to the presence of operatives who were begrimed by their honest toil. This difficulty was surmounted by a little tact ; but still the British working man did not altogether relish being catered for, so eventually the control of the culinary operations was handed over to the men themselves, they paying rent for the hall, and managing it themselves. After that, matters went on smoothly, and the workshop, in the latter hours of the day, was provided with better atmospheric conditions. No intoxicating drink, then or now, was allowed, but smoking was permitted, provided no one struck a match until half an hour was passed.

Comfortable dining-rooms were also provided for clerks, who found it impossible to get to and fro from their lodgings in the allotted time. Classes in mathematics, machine-drawing, English literature, history, and singing were established, and a good library was opened for the men and boys. Concerts and lectures were occasionally given, a savings' bank was founded, and twice a week half-hour addresses were delivered during the dinner hour on subjects which the men themselves selected.

Apart from all this, a sick visitor was appointed, and a dispensary, with an able doctor attached, for the exclusive use of the men employed at the works and their families.

The half-hour addresses were delivered at this time by the late Dr. Langford, usually to an audience of about a thousand men. They were given on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and, beginning punctually at half-past one, occupied from twenty to twenty-five minutes. The men gave him his text, of course beforehand, and, in nine cases out of ten it was upon some question of the day. Occasionally this was varied by an address on some great man in history or literature. Dr. Langford possessed the happy art of speaking to the point in a pithy and picturesque manner. Sometimes he would discuss measures which were before Parliament, or a great Imperial question, like that involved in the purchase of the Suez Canal, or he would seize upon the presence of a great gathering of Foresters in Birmingham to interest his audience in Friendly Societies, and the thrift which lay at their basis. He spoke in easy, conversational terms, without talking down to the gathering, which was shrewd-headed enough, and quick, therefore, to detect any fallacy in the speaker's argument.

Richard Tangye always held that these addresses were a great advantage to the workpeople; they went away to read their newspapers more intelligently, and to look at questions at issue in national affairs from a larger point of view. The

workmen themselves greatly appreciated this innovation, for one day they surprised Dr. Langford by giving him an illuminated address and a purse of twenty guineas, in recognition of his services.

About one matter in connection with the Cornwall Works, Richard Tangye was always proud—that the prosperity of the business, increasing by leaps and bounds, was not achieved at the expense of other manufacturers. “I believe,” were his words, “that four-fifths of the business, including pumping machinery, hydraulic machinery generally, lifting tackle, and, to a large extent, steam engines, was not only new to Birmingham, but was also the result of new inventions, or adaptations previously unknown.” Machinery was already beginning to do wonderful things, and was adding to the resources of civilisation, in every direction.

The allusion, in the words just quoted, to “lifting tackle” recalls not the least wonderful achievement of modern engineering skill. Every one who has ever walked along the Victoria Embankment in London knows the majestic ancient obelisk, which is called Cleopatra's Needle, but not every one knows how the great monolith was raised to its commanding pedestal on the banks of the Thames. It stood in far-off centuries before the Temple of Heliopolis, where it was placed by Thothmes III., perhaps, as Richard Tangye liked to think, in the presence of the patriarch Joseph. It was afterward re-erected by Rameses II. at Alexandria, but it had long been lying prostrate when Mehemet

Ali, early in the last century, offered to present it to the English Government. But the great granite column, covered with hieroglyphics, was more than sixty-eight feet in height, and weighed no less than one hundred and eighty-six tons, and in those days there was no machinery equal to the task of its removal. It was brought, however, to London in 1878 through private munificence, in a specially constructed cigar-shaped cylinder, which, by the way, had an adventurous voyage and was actually lost during a storm in the Bay of Biscay. The cylinder had been towed successfully through the Mediterranean, but was lost in the hurricane afterwards encountered. It was quickly recovered, however, when the storm abated, and then new difficulties arose, for it was no easy task to place the huge obelisk in position on the Embankment.

The Tangye hydraulic jacks had worked so admirably when the Great Eastern was launched, that they were again called into operation to raise Cleopatra's Needle from a horizontal to a perpendicular position, and, without any hitch, in September 1878, the great monolith was placed in the position where it now stands, and where it is likely to stand, for centuries to come. The task was accomplished with a rapidity and ease which astonished scientific experts, as well as the crowd, which cheered loudly when Cleopatra's Needle slowly rose to an upright position, with the English flag fluttering on its summit. Beneath it in a recess in the socket was placed a map of London,

the newspapers of the day, the book of Genesis in Arabic and Hebrew, and copies of the Bible in other languages, besides standard weights and measures, presented by the Board of Trade. There was also placed under the obelisk, to Richard Tangye's gratification, one of the hydraulic jacks, which he thought might prove a puzzle to some remote archæologist, engaged in making researches amid the ruins of London.

He thought that the progress of engineering science, in raising great weights, was thrown into relief by the methods employed in erecting obelisks between the sixteenth century and the Victorian era. Domenico Fontana, the great Italian architect, at the instance of Pope Sixtus V., placed in position, in the year 1856, the obelisk which now stands in front of St. Peter's at Rome. He did so with forty capstans, which were worked by nine hundred and sixty men and seventy-five horses. Las Bas, in the reign of Louis-Philippe, raised the Luxor obelisk at Paris, in 1836, with ten capstans and the labour of four hundred and eighty men. But, in little more than half a century later, Cleopatra's Needle was placed in position on the Thames Embankment with four of Tangye's hydraulic jacks, which were worked by four men. It was something to be proud of, and the success of such an achievement did not a little to advance the reputation of the firm.

All sorts of engineering difficulties, some of which had long taxed the wit of man before the invention of

the hydraulic jack, became possible with its help. A lofty chimney in the Midlands, for instance, which had become a menace by the partial subsidence of the ground on which it was built, was lifted by the aid of this machine, and placed in a new foundation, and many of the old wooden railway viaducts, in a dangerous condition through the wear and tear of years of railway traffic, were put to rights without any interruption of the trains. It could raise buildings in Cheshire which had subsided through the pumping of brine, and hold them at a sufficient height until new foundations were made. In other directions, scarcely less remarkable, the Tangye jacks gave an equally good account of themselves, and by doing so—since in this world nothing succeeds like success—brought no little grist to the Cornwall Works.

CHAPTER IX.

EDUCATIONAL REFORM

Excuses of the wealthy—Richard Tangye's municipal and social services—Advocacy of Technical Education—Broadcloth *versus* Fustian—Language classes at Cornwall Works—A fair start for the children of the people—Results of Board Schools—Science teaching—"Study and work together"—Essentials for skilled labour—Self-reliance—No mercy on the loafer—Going forward—"Good advice, and nothing more."

A GREAT test of character in a man is the use to which he puts freedom from financial strain. It is so easy, with an increasing balance at the bank, to grow hard, self-satisfied, ignobly content. The tragedy of ten thousand lives, which are outwardly prosperous, consists in the refusal, open or unexpressed, to cherish ideals. Such people are too apt to batten down in inglorious ease, and to hold wealth, not as a trust, but merely as a means of personal gratification. That way lies one of the chief menaces of modern England—the practical though unavowed cynical indifference of so many wealthy and leisured people to the claims of the community. It needs some strong controlling

principle to enable men, hitherto poor and struggling, when they come to an assured position and ample means—not in old age, but in mid-career—to resist the subtle appeal to follow the easy road of careless enjoyment. When a man grows prosperous after twenty years of strenuous toil, which has taxed every fibre of his nature, he is apt to rest and be thankful, and to meet demands on his personal service with the too familiar plea, “I pray thee have me excused”—surely one of the most convenient, and, in the moral sense, one of the most disastrous phrases on human lips.

Richard Tangye was forty-five, and therefore in the full heyday of life, when he watched the obelisk rise slowly into position in the autumn of 1878. It stood there like a golden milestone in the story of his life, and had for him a significance, which the crowd who cheered the completion of the great task little knew. That buried hydraulic jack at its base was only a passing incident to other people, but it meant to him and the house he represented a new and substantial achievement—a milestone, in short, on the road to renown. His hands were full enough of work just then—the complicated and insistent tasks inseparable from a business which was beginning to establish itself, in tentative fashion, in various quarters of the world. His health, moreover, was uncertain, and his temperament was highly strung, and, since he was also sympathetic in no ordinary degree, private demands

of all kinds, not easy to resist, were knocking at his door.

He had no ambition for public life, and, though the common opinion was that he was admirably fitted for it, those who knew him best were of different mind, and felt that he had enough in hand already, without taking upon himself the additional strain of public work. But he had, what so many men lack, the sense of public duty. He had made his money in Birmingham, and he felt that he ought to throw himself heart and soul into its municipal life. He became, in consequence, a member of the Smethwick School Board, for in the work of education he was keenly interested, and also a member of the Town Council, where his wide commercial knowledge, and his intimate acquaintance with the habits and aspirations of the working classes, made his presence valuable. He wanted, he said, to help to "open up the dark and insanitary part of the town" to the blessings of light and fresh air, and in other directions to assist in the social betterment of the people.

Both in the Town Council and on the School Board he quickly made his mark by a happy union of courage and common sense. He was nothing if not practical, and there was nothing that was practical in the way of improvement which did not appeal to him. He took up all sorts of questions which related to the progress of the community, and helped to carry them to a successful issue by his tenacity and humour. The same qualities carried

him far in the work of the School Board. He was a whole-hearted believer in the wisdom of Forster's great system of Primary Education. But he quickly perceived that, in a community like Birmingham, the kind of education that it was imperative to give ought to be technical rather than literary.

He recognised, long before most people, that if we were to compete on equal terms with our foreign rivals, we must abandon purely bookish ideals for the training of the hands and eyes. This he saw was imperative, if our ambition was not to turn out clerks on a market that was already overstocked in that direction, but skilled mechanics, who might start in life with a thorough grasp of the rudiments of their calling. Birmingham took the lead in this direction, and Richard Tangye was a pioneer of the movement. He always held that public money, or even private, could not be better spent than in giving the children of the poor a chance in life, and, in season and out, he advocated a generous and enlightened policy in all that concerned the work of education.

He had the courage to state unpopular truths. He never concealed his opinion, for instance, that artisans made a great mistake when they sought, by means of free education, to train their sons for the position of clerks. The market in that direction was already overcrowded, and it was a pity to condemn a bright lad to a black coat, which in reality meant genteel poverty.

The root of the mischief lay in the vulgar notion that manual labour was something to be ashamed

of ; but he knew too well how this fallacy crippled, at the start, many a promising young life, not to protest against it. Promotion from the ranks was another matter, and in his dealings with the work-people he gave it full play ; but he held stoutly to the old-fashioned maxim that a man should abide in his own calling, since, if he possessed diligence and capacity, there was no limit to the position which he might attain in it. It is better to begin in fustian and rise to broadcloth, than to begin in broadcloth and wear it threadbare—that, in a word, was often his theme—one which he drove home with many racy, telling, and picturesque examples. If further illustration is needed, it is enough to point to the men who hold responsible positions in the Cornwall Works, and to ask them where they started. Many a workman, who rose to a more or less important position in the firm, obtained his first knowledge, not only of machine drawing and construction, but even of reading and writing, long before the Education Act became law, through classes which were established at the Tangye Works.

When Forster's great measure began to turn out lads for the battle of life, who could read and write, this part of instruction was, of course, abandoned. The Tangyes might have rested on their oars at such a point, but, to their credit, they did not do so, for they established classes for the teaching of French, Spanish, German, and shorthand, and, as a spur to progress in such directions, offered substantial advantages to those who showed proficiency

in such subjects. They were able, after a while, to dispense with the services of foreign clerks, who, as Richard Tangye said, were usually birds of passage, coming to this country, not merely to earn a livelihood, but to pick up information in English business houses, which, in due course, was placed at the service of foreign manufacturers. These classes were eventually relinquished, because, as education broadened, they were no longer required, but they were steadily maintained at the Cornwall Works, until various evening schools and institutions for technical training were available in Birmingham to all who cared for such knowledge.

Richard Tangye held stoutly to the view that the children of the poor should be properly equipped for the practical tasks of life, and no man, in the great community where he lived and laboured, did more to throw open wide to them the doors of knowledge. He ridiculed the notion that it was possible to go too fast or too far in such directions, and was indignant with those who urged, as a great many people did a generation ago, that if the masses were given the best possible education, they would grow discontented, and quarrel with their lot. He always held that hundreds and thousands of poverty-stricken children, up and down the land, were placed at a cruel disadvantage through the improvidence, to use no harsher term, of their parents. No one could, of course, deny that many of these parents, hard-driven themselves, no doubt, in the struggle for existence, crippled, in many instances, by their

own carelessness and vicious habits, had neglected their duty. But that was no reason why the rising generation—itsself the most valuable asset of the State—should be allowed to drift along without any real chance in life. He never forgot his own hard struggle, and the recollection of it made him eager, and enthusiastic as well, that the children of the people should have a fair start in life. He held strongly that the poor lad of exceptional ability, should have every opportunity given him, in the interests of the nation itself.

Those who began with no capital, except their industry and intelligence, surely, on all grounds, ought to be adequately equipped for toil, and have their feet firmly set on the first steps of the ladder of success. Hence, as a manager of the Smethwick Board School, and in the Town Council of Birmingham, in the Press, and on public platforms as well, he proved himself a true friend of the working classes years before he was in a position to give substantial financial aid to such a movement. When the Education Act had been in operation only a few years, he summed up, in a speech made at the opening of the new Board School, close to the Cornwall Works, his impressions of the movement. He declared, speaking as a member of the School Board and also as an employer of labour, that the result had been to make a more intelligent class of workpeople. The fears that had been expressed in many quarters had not been justified; on the contrary, from every point of view, whether social

or economic, the outcome of the working of the Education Act had proved advantageous to the community.

“What has been my own experience? Since the passing of the Education Act, more than one thousand Board School boys have found employment in the Cornwall Works, and the universal testimony concerning them is that, as compared with those of the era previous to the existence of the Board Schools, there is a marked improvement in every way.” He went on to show that the lads were more amenable to discipline, more orderly in their habits, and better able to meet the demands of the work they had to do. They were not so sluggish; they evinced far more desire to learn the business of their lives, and therefore they gained a practical mastery of it in much less time. But this was not all. The best of them were not inclined to be content with the routine of their daily toil. They had come into possession of new tastes, and were beginning—a voluntary movement of the utmost importance—to take full advantage of the chances of culture, provided by such institutions as the Mason Science College, the School of Art, and the Midland Institute, and all this told surely and steadily in the creation of a more capable and alert class in the ranks of labour.

He wished to see, so far as elementary education was concerned, absolute equality for every child in the land, and he thought that the special needs of each community ought to be studied, so that the

lad, who of necessity begins the practical work of his life under his father's roof, might find himself able to meet its demands where he stood. "I am of opinion that it would be impossible to over-estimate the importance and advantage of teaching science in the elementary schools of a manufacturing town like Birmingham." When he spoke it had already been introduced, and, as a practical man, he claimed that the system he advocated was thoroughly sound. He predicted, what has since come to pass, that every industry in that great centre would, in the course of a few years, benefit perceptibly by the new departure. "But something more than science-teaching in our elementary schools is needed if our artisans are to keep their boasted, but well-merited, pre-eminence in the industrial world. The training of the hand and the eye, by the teaching of drawing and by technical instruction, is absolutely essential if the country is to hold its own. The motto of the Royal Agricultural Society of England is an admirable one and should be adopted by the technical schools of the future—'Practice with Science.'"

One day Richard Tangye's quick eyes saw some words in an American newspaper, which he thought so excellent that he had them printed, and circulated amongst the younger men at the works. They were written by Horace Greeley, who, in an address to the artisans of the United States, said: "Above all, to be a successful mechanic, you must be a mathematician. Unless you can conquer the mathe-

matics of this trade, you will always have to drudge at the hardest work done. With a thorough practical knowledge of the work, and of the principles underlying it, you will soon rise above the lathe and the file. Study and work together." It was characteristic of Richard Tangye not merely to endorse that shrewd bit of advice, but to scatter it broadcast. He knew what it meant to those who had the sense to follow it. He adopted the final words himself, as well as gave them to others, for, to the end of his days, in one direction or another, he was ever a worker, and always a student.

He used to say that there was a right way and a wrong way of going about a thing—the scientific method and the rule of thumb, and that it was the former which he wished to advance. He wanted to see schools established to teach every man, whatever his trade might be, the right way of setting about it. This was the secret of his enthusiasm for technical training—the man who possessed skilled hands was in possession of the first conditions of success, and was already on the road to advancement. "I have often heard it said that there are not so many chances for a young man to rise nowadays as formerly. I do not agree with this view. I believe there are greater chances now than ever there were. But these greater opportunities demand greater qualities—qualities that can only be acquired by an increased devotion to study, greater self-discipline, and an unconquerable determination to master the principles that underlie the profession

or business concerned. Less opportunity for getting on ! Why one of the greatest difficulties of large employers is to find thoroughly capable men to manage the various departments of their concerns ; there are many who think themselves capable, but few who can stand the test." Even in the ranks of foremen, the last words were true within his own experience, for it happened, not once or twice at the Cornwall Works, that posts of that kind were found difficult to fill with properly qualified persons, even though the wages offered were equal to the income of many a struggling professional man.

Few people ever placed greater stress than Richard Tangye on the virtue of self-reliance. He had proved at every turn of his life what such a quality was worth, and, if he had not himself possessed it in a marked degree, half the things which he accomplished would never have been achieved. Life turns on the redemption of its opportunities, and it is the work of a strong man to find them, even in the midst of passing discouragements. But he knew also that a man, who enters the battle of life armed with the kind of knowledge which he needs for the practical work of his life, is at an advantage in the struggle, and is not likely to beat the air. It was this conviction, gathered in the hard school of experience, which made him determine, so far as in him lay, that others should be better equipped than he was when he took up the practical tasks of his calling. Hence he strove persistently, in

those strenuous years in Birmingham when the turn in his own fortunes had taken place, to spur others onward, to advance the interests of the working classes, and to raise the quality of manual labour.

He believed in recreation so long as it was kept in its proper place, but he had been trained to think that, after all, the conquest of work was the finest thing to which a man could set his hand. If there was a man he despised, it was the man who did as little as he could, and slurred that. The loafer, wherever he was found, was his mortal antipathy, and if he appeared in the Cornwall Works scant mercy was shown him. He always called a spade a spade, and when a man had either that, or some other tool, in his hand, he expected him to use it to some purpose.

His judgments of men were, as a rule, kindly, and he could make large and generous allowances for those who failed through incompetency, but none to those who came to grief for no other reason than that they were incurably lazy. People, who were living epistles of much cry and no wool, were not long in finding out that in Richard Tangye's company they were scarcely in congenial society.

"Every man's future, to a great extent, is in his own keeping," was one of his sayings, and he was never tired of telling the British workman to take courage, and to rest assured that in the battle of life there are as many prizes to be won to-day as

was ever the case. He had a happy knack of turning his own reminiscences of early life to admirable account, especially when speaking to an eager group of lads. Here is an instance—one of many examples which might be cited—of his method of driving home good advice: “When I was a boy, I had a companion who often accompanied me to school—or rather he kept twenty yards behind me; and in response to the call to ‘come on,’ would reply, ‘wait a bit.’ That characteristic has stuck to him all through life. Now to ‘wait a bit’ to reflect is very good occasionally; but great difficulties have been overcome by going forward, not by waiting a bit. And so, to sum up the whole matter I would say, ‘Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might,’ and do it at once.”

In spite of such a counsel of perfection, there were times in his life when Richard Tangye would have done better, in the business sense, if he had been less eager, and had been content to follow the Quaker maxim that it is good “to sleep over” a matter.

The story is told of a distinguished and wealthy nobleman, the bearer of an historic title, who died not many years ago, and played a great part in politics in the Victorian Era, that he was always ready, in response to public appeals from the vast city which lay close to his ancestral home, to give good advice, and—nothing more. Richard Tangye followed a more excellent way. He gave good advice, for he had the faculty of speech and the instinct of

sympathy ; but if he had given nothing more, men would have shrugged their shoulders in this case also, and let it pass unheeded. It was because he did good with both hands earnestly, that men took knowledge of him in Birmingham as a true lover of humanity, who, both by precept and example, was intent on the advancement of the people.

He lived in the spirit of one who said, " Go forth into the busy world and love it, interest yourself in its life ; mingle kindly with its joys and sorrows Try what you can do for men rather than what you can make them do for you." So he came, not all at once, but by a process of quiet and unconscious growth, into what, after all, is the most beautiful thing on earth—a heart set free from self, alive and sensitive to the needs of others.

CHAPTER X

POLITICAL INTERESTS

Richard Tangye in society—Family bonds—Recreations and hobbies—Love of books—Some of his friends—Refusal to enter Parliament—Wit and power of retort—Fidelity to the Liberal Party—The *Daily Argus*—Gladstone asks him to stand for Birmingham—Admiration for John Bright—First election of Bright for Birmingham—Hints on public speaking—Bright's defence of the North in the American Civil War—Tangye's shortest speech—Honour to Sir Josiah Mason—Incident in a railway carriage—Relations with Mr. Chamberlain—Gladstone and Home Rule—Working-men in Parliament.

RICHARD TANGYE's friendships grew naturally out of his business relations with men, his travels, his bookish tastes, his philanthropic and political activities. He went very little into society, even in the comparative leisure of his later years. One who knew him well states that when he was in a room full of strangers, he seemed ill at ease, and would sit quietly until something was said which aroused his interest or caught his fancy. Suddenly he would lose his shyness and begin to speak so admirably well, that the whole company gathered around him, charmed by his picturesque and witty

talk, until a story, which he had intended for one listener, led every one captive. This proved a little embarrassing to him at times, and brought him to a halt, but more frequently it drew forth his powers, and made people regret that he could not more frequently be inveigled into a drawing-room.

He was, in truth, seen at his best by his own fire-side, for he was, beyond all else, a home-loving man, who, though given to hospitality, was of simple tastes. His early life had been so strenuous, and so broken by travel in the interests of business, that he had little opportunity for social intercourse in the ordinary acceptation of the term. His brothers in those years were his closest friends, and they were knit together by old memories and practical interests, and to a certain extent by common tastes. They were all loyal to the home of their childhood, and the beautiful memory of their father and mother, in their case, as in that of thousands of other men and women, drew them closely together long after their parents had passed away.

But they all had other interests, of course, of one kind and another, and this was especially true of Richard. He never forgot the past—its tender constraint lay over all his life—but he lived, in the fullest sense, in the present, and had the capacity to see and to seize the opportunities which came to him, as life broadened out, with the advance of his fortunes, and gave him more and more the opportunity of following his own bent, whether as book-worm, politician, or philanthropist.

Some men think when they succeed in life, that they are entitled to a yacht, or shooting-box in the Highlands, or to an endless round of amusements, especially if wealth, as in his case, is won with the full zest of life undiminished. He did not blame such men, for he recognised in that, as in everything else, the right of private judgment. He did not even claim that he followed a more excellent way. He merely took the road that he thought was best for himself, but his choice revealed his character.

He was not a scholar in the ordinary sense of the word, for in early life he had, at best, a scanty education, but he possessed a reverence for learning, and, in his own fashion, he pursued it all his days. He read widely on all sorts of topics, but chiefly works of history and biography and concentrated, at last, all his energies around the dramatic period of the Commonwealth, and especially the masterful career of Oliver Cromwell. In this direction his knowledge was exact, intimate, and curious, for he was not content with the standard historical books on the subject, but made himself acquainted with contemporary evidence, in the shape of political tracts and pamphlets, and other more or less obscure clues to interpretation.

He did not want a yacht ; he had seen enough of the sea. He had no ambition for a shooting-box, for he was as much afraid of wounding an animal as a friend. But he had a passion for books, and so he accumulated a library. There is a good story told of a certain man who did the same, and who vain-

gloriously ushered a guest into his library with the words, "These are my friends," as he pointed to the books. The visitor walked rapidly to the shelves and took down a volume at random, opened it abruptly, put it back in its place, and then bowing with fine irony to his host exclaimed, "Ah, I see you never cut your friends!" That remark could never have been made to Richard Tangye, for, in spite of his defective eyesight, he read his books, made copious extracts from them, and lived in their company, content with the thoughts which they inspired. The extent of his reading again and again leaped to light, not merely in apt citations in letters and speeches, but in casual conversation. He had a retentive memory, and his talk was often enriched with felicitous literary allusions, which bore directly on the subject under discussion.

Books apart, his intimate friendships were not many, and nearly all the men who knew him at close quarters died, to his infinite regret, before his own end came. Some of them, like Mr. Sam Timmins, a well-known Shakespearean scholar, and Mr. Henwood Thomas, were constant visitors at his house at Glendorgal, and it is a pity that the conversations that took place on books and politics, enlivened as they were by many a racy story, cannot now be recalled. Dr. R. W. Dale, of Birmingham, whose power on the platform was scarcely less great than in the pulpit, and whose ministry at Carr's Lane Chapel Richard Tangye attended, was another man who had his confidence. He also knew

Dawson well, and admired his exceptional gifts as a lecturer and as a conversationalist, and he knew, of course, nearly everybody else who was worth knowing in the capital of the Midlands.

He had trusted friends also in the Cornwall Works. It would be invidious to single out names, men to whom he had given their first start in life—and who had rewarded his implicit confidence by unswerving loyalty. His letters show that he had warm-hearted correspondents in all parts of the world, and in all ranks of life, from peers and professors, to artisans and peasants. Yet it still remains true, that, with all his expansive sympathies and genial cordiality, to only a few people did he reveal himself in the sense which makes friendship almost the most sacred and beautiful thing on earth. To the two or three who did know him in that manner, conversation with him was, to borrow Lynch's words, "often a picnic of fancy, sometimes a sacrament of souls." Perhaps they only knew the depth of his humility, and the sharp self-questionings which lay at the back of his life.

Surprise was often expressed, not merely in Birmingham, but in other parts of the country as well, that Richard Tangye never tried to enter the House of Commons. If he had had any ambition in that direction he certainly could have realised it, for, long before he was pressed to stand for the Central Division of Birmingham, he had again and again been approached by other constituencies which were anxious to secure his services. He wrote

to one of his friends in the spring of 1885—who thought that he was standing in his own light by declining such overtures—in the following terms :

“For five years I have known for a certainty that I could not stand the wear and tear of Parliamentary life, and, although many people in Birmingham have made up their minds long since that all my public actions have been carefully planned with the sole view of obtaining a seat in Parliament, it is none the less a fact that they have misjudged me all the while, and utterly so. I have endeavoured to serve the town in my own way, and can truly say that my motives have been as pure as human motives are capable of being, and so I have been content to bear the unkind remarks and suspicions which have been made, until time should prove how unfounded they were. Perhaps now these people will do me justice.”

He may have been right in declining such overtures, for his health was uncertain and never robust, and his temperament was always sensitive. But those who knew him best, though they had their misgivings about his ability to stand such a strain, felt that he had qualities which would have been appreciated in such an assembly, even though the cut and thrust of party politics might have ruffled his composure. His mastery of practical affairs, his power of compressing into a few pithy, incisive sentences the gist of the question at issue, the accent of sincerity with which he always spoke, his quick and witty retorts, and, above all, the frank and

winning sincerity of the man, and his capacity, on occasion, for moral indignation, are qualities not too common in public life to be ignored. Yet he was a shy man, diffident of his own powers, and, up to the period when his strength began to flag, he was immersed in business, and so he felt that, health apart, he was better out of the fray, and that, perhaps more than anything else, explains why he stood aside.

Still it remains true that, from youth to age, there were few men in the country who evinced a more keen and practical interest in the fortunes of the Liberal Party than Richard Tangye, and not many who made greater financial sacrifices on its behalf. One instance of this occurred when he founded the *Daily Argus* in Birmingham, at a period when the tide ran strongly against the Liberal Party, after Mr. Chamberlain had gone over to the opposite camp in consequence of Gladstone's adoption of Home Rule. In this public-spirited enterprise, he was associated with his old friend Sir Hugh Gilzean Reid, who brought to the project, what Richard Tangye did not claim to possess, wide and exceptional knowledge of journalism and newspaper management. There was at that time no journal in Birmingham which represented Liberal views, and the *Daily Argus* was started in order to keep the old flag flying in a great centre of public opinion, which till then had been not only loyal but enthusiastic and advanced in the Liberal cause. It was an important venture, and Richard Tangye, obtaining

sole proprietorship, turned it over to his sons, Lincoln and the late Arthur Tangye, the former of whom took the active control and carried the enterprise on for a number of years. In other directions he rendered important services to the Liberal Party in his own locality, from the days when John Bright, fresh from his defeat in Manchester in 1857, was elected for Birmingham, down to Gladstone's last tenure of power.

There is no need to dwell on Richard Tangye's admiration for Gladstone. The great Liberal leader had qualities which appealed directly to him, quite apart from questions of the hour, and through good report and ill, he gave him his steady, unflinching, and enthusiastic support. In July 1890, Gladstone wrote a letter urging him to stand for the Handsworth Division of Birmingham. In that letter he laid stress on Tangye's remarkable history, his position and reputation in Birmingham, and his peculiar fitness to represent a great industrial constituency "with more than ordinary distinction," because of his knowledge, ability and character. In his reply to this request, Richard Tangye, whilst acknowledging the honour done him, clearly stated the reasons which compelled him to decline the strenuous responsibility of Parliamentary life. "I need not say," he wrote, "how highly I esteem your kindly references to the record of my past career, and the desire which you are so good to express, that I should take a more prominent part in political work. Coming from one who, sacri-

ficing every consideration of personal comfort, has so long and so nobly served his country, the expressions of such a wish would, under ordinary circumstances, be accepted by me as a command ; but I am sure you will pardon me if I venture to point out some difficulties under which I labour in considering the generally expressed desire that I should stand for the Handsworth Parliamentary Division.

“About four years ago my health completely broke down, after thirty-five years of very hard work, during the last ten years of which time I not only had the principal part in the management of a vast business, but took a full share of public work in the Town Council and School Board of my district, and in political work in Birmingham and the neighbourhood. This long period of hard work has told upon my constitution, enfeebled as it was by the hardships of my early years, and at the present moment I am quite unable to undertake the responsibility and excitement necessarily attending the candidature for a seat in Parliament.

“I assure you that it is no small disappointment to me that I am compelled to come to this conclusion now that I have the means and the time needful for undertaking such a position ; but my doctors absolutely forbid it. But, Sir, I feel that there are other ways in which I can serve the good cause, and you may confidently rely on my doing so to the best of my ability.”

Richard Tangye's respect for John Bright,—tried

though it was when that statesman parted company with Gladstone over Home Rule,—was deep and abiding. At many a stormy political crisis during the long term of years, when the great orator represented Birmingham, Tangye by voice and pen, and in other directions, let it be said, as well, did all that in him lay to strengthen Bright's hold on the constituency. The two men had much in common, apart from the fact that both of them had been trained in the Society of Friends, and, as time went on, political association ripened into personal friendship. No man was more welcome under Tangye's roof than the silvered-tongued champion of Free Trade. Many letters passed between them, and many were the stories that Richard Tangye had to tell of a man who, more than once in his career, confronted the nation like an incarnate conscience. One of the last messages which John Bright sent from his death-bed at Rochdale were some tender words of gratitude to Richard Tangye. Here are a few typical examples of his recollections of the great Tribune of the people :—

“The only occasion on which John Bright made a public appearance in Birmingham between the stirring Corn Law days, and when elected member for the town, was when he came to a Town Hall meeting, called to protest against the renewal of the East India Company's Charter. It was the first time I had seen the great orator ; he was attired in the Quaker costume, but looked every inch a fighting man. Bright described the constitution of the

Council that ruled the great Indian Empire from their easy chairs in Leadenhall Street, and caused much amusement by saying that if you closed Temple Bar and took the first hundred people who pressed through it when it was opened again, you would get just as good a Council.

“When John Bright’s name was first mentioned as a candidate for the representation of Birmingham the town was dominated by the gunmaking industry, and the bellicose feelings roused by the recent Russian War had by no means subsided. How came it, then, that the great apostle of peace, so recently dismissed from Manchester with shameful ingratitude, because of those principles, was received with such magnificent enthusiasm in the gun-making town? There is no doubt about the cause. The virile Radicalism that actuated the men of Birmingham, when they assembled in their thousands on Newhall Hill, was still the prevailing political force there, and some of the principal gunmakers were amongst the leading members of the party. The late member, George Frederick Muntz, was a militant Radical, whom no one would accuse of possessing extreme peace principles. How astonished he would have been had he known that he would be succeeded in the representation of the town by John Bright, the guiding spirit of the Manchester school.

“How well I remember the time! The first name brought before the constituency by the Liberals was that of A. H. Layard, of Nineveh

fame. One night the town was placarded with 'Layard for Birmingham;' before the next day the name was obliterated, for every available space was covered with huge placards, 'Bright for Birmingham,' and from that moment the election of the rejected of Manchester was assured. Bright was too ill to come to Birmingham to take part in his first election; he stopped short at Tamworth, where my old friend Ald. Manton visited him, and brought away his election address, which he had written there. At the first meeting after the election, if my memory serves me, Mr. Duncan Maclaren, of Edinburgh, Mr. Bright's brother-in-law, represented the new member, who was still too ill to attend."

"It has been my good fortune to hear John Bright deliver more than fifty speeches in the Birmingham Town Hall. No one willingly missed an opportunity of hearing him; his splendid diction, and its unrivalled mastery of strong Saxon English, his transparent sincerity and depth of conviction, irresistibly attracted thoughtful men. His Friends' School training, where, reading from that pure well of English undefiled—the Authorised Version of the Bible—was the daily practice, gave style and tone to all his public utterances. This, in the early years of manhood, was supplemented by wide reading of the masterpieces of his mother tongue, notably the classic pages of the great Puritan poet, John Milton, whose lofty imagination, majestic

imagery, and moral vision appealed resistlessly to him. I have often tested Bright's speeches, and have found that two-thirds of them were composed of words of one syllable; little wonder that they were easily "understood" of the people!

"John Bright once gave me these hints on public speaking:—'Never speak unless you have something to say. Don't be tempted to go on after you have said it. Use the simplest words, bring out the consonants well (the vowels will take care of themselves), and let every sentence, as far as possible, be complete in itself.' Bright's point as to stopping when you have said what you intended to say reminds me of the criticism of a village carpenter on a certain divine, who evidently had thumped the cushion too persistently. 'This worthy declared that the preacher struck the nail on the head at the first go off, but kept on hammering until he split the board.'"

"It is hardly too much to say that John Bright's speeches in favour of the North during the Civil War were a more potential factor in keeping the peace between this country and the United States than anything else. Mr. W. Scholefield was Bright's colleague in the representation of the borough at the time, and did not share his views on the question. I well remember the difficult position in which Bright found himself on one occasion when the two members were addressing their constituents in the Town Hall. Mr. Schole-

field, being the senior member, spoke first, and was decidedly apologetic when speaking of the action of the South. His address was received with respectful coolness ; it was the first occasion on which the members had spoken to their constituents on the subject, and it was not quite certain what view they would take of it. But all doubt soon vanished before Bright had got far in his splendid defence of the North, and Birmingham remained true to the cause of freedom to the end."

"It is not always the longest speeches that are the most effective. I think the first I ever delivered in the Birmingham Town Hall was my most successful effort ; it consisted of three words. It was during one of John Bright's early contests, and the Town Hall was filled with a surging, excited mass of people. The audience was overwhelmingly in favour of Bright, when even the most moderate opposition orator had little chance of being heard. It was under these conditions that a man who had only recently compounded with his creditors—not for the first time, it was understood—got up and began a virulent diatribe against the candidate. The meeting became indignant, and did its utmost to howl the speaker down, but without success. Presently there was a lull, and seizing my opportunity, in stentorian tones I cried out, 'Pay your debts !' The effect was electrical. Every one recognised the appositeness of the cry, and no one better than the obnoxious speaker, who immediately collapsed.

Curiously enough, in after years he became one of Bright's warmest admirers."

"I once heard John Bright make these observations on the subject of platform deliverances: 'Do not get up unless you have something useful to say, but, having decided to speak, think your subject well over. Then frame a mental picture of it, and choose your words carefully, always using the simplest words by preference, so as to be "understood of the people" of all ranks and conditions. Speak deliberately, finish every word before beginning another, be careful of your punctuation, and let every sentence have something definite in it,—an egg in every shell. When you have said your "say," sit down and don't be tempted by the apparent interest of your audience to prolong your observations.'"

"When John Bright had completed his twenty-fifth year as representative of the town in Parliament, the event was celebrated by a series of demonstrations. In his speech, acknowledging the warm congratulations conveyed to him by various speakers, Bright told an amusing story of the late Sir Josiah Mason, the founder of the Birmingham University. At a meeting called to do honour to Sir Josiah, he said he sat next that gentleman, and as the speakers excelled one another in the praises they lavished upon him, Bright looked upon his face with wonder, the look of pleasure and gratification was so intense. 'How can he stand it?'

Bright asked of some one near him. 'Because he is stone deaf,' was the reply. Bright said that he at least could not plead that excuse."

It would be easy to cite many recollections of the same sort, but perhaps it is well only to add one other story, not less significant, though in a different vein :—"Two Lancashire manufacturers were one day sitting in a railway carriage chatting over their newspapers. A third gentleman sat in a corner hidden by the *Times*, in which he was deeply interested. One of the manufacturers suddenly exclaimed, 'Why, old So-and-so is dead. I wonder how much he was worth !' His companion suggested £60,000. The other thought that too small a sum. Finally, after a little debate, marked by small feeling for the dead man, they settled the point, to their own satisfaction, at £100,000. The stranger in the corner crumpled up his paper, and looking quietly across the carriage exclaimed: 'I wonder what sort of start that has given him in the life to which he has gone ?' The man who put that unexpected question was John Bright."

With Mr. Chamberlain, Richard Tangye's relations were much less intimate, though for years he worked side by side with him in the municipal life of Birmingham, and afterwards worked for him when he was returned as Bright's colleague. He always admired the strenuous manner in which he entered into the public life of the community, and, to the last day of his life, was prepared to admit, without any

reserve, the greatness of his services to Birmingham. But when the Irish Home Rule question led Mr. Chamberlain to head the revolt against Gladstone, and eventually to sever his association with the Liberal Party, Richard Tangye was one of the few prominent men in the Midlands who refused to follow his example. Party feeling ran very high in those days and sharp words were uttered on both sides. It is certain that Tangye would not himself have followed Gladstone at that crisis merely because of the magic of his name, or the unrivalled authority which he had won with the party by his character and work. Such a motive at so great a crisis, was not enough for such a man. He followed Gladstone because he realised the substantial justice of the demands of Ireland.

The tide of Unionism rose high and threatened to carry all before it, and the bewildered Liberals of Birmingham, with Bright and Chamberlain both in opposition to the great scheme of Gladstone, had a difficult part to play,—so difficult, indeed, that the majority of them may be said to have surrendered at discretion. But a minority stood firm, though to do so meant the severance of old political associations, and in many cases, what was more painful, old friendships. Richard Tangye suffered not a little at that period by his uncompromising attitude and his outspoken protests, but he felt that he would have been false to all the traditions of his life if he had adopted the easy and discreet method of silence.

This is not the place in which to revive old controversies, nor would it serve any good purpose to describe in detail, what Tangye felt to be an inglorious and humiliating chapter in the political annals of Birmingham. It is enough to say that he stood, through thick and thin, by the policy of Gladstone, though it cost him not a little to part company with John Bright,—a circumstance which in that case, however, made no difference to their personal relations. Mr. Chamberlain knew better than most men the weight which Richard Tangye's words carried in Birmingham, and he can scarcely have relished the pungent criticism which was levelled by his old supporter against his policy. It is pleasant to be able to add that, without the least surrender of conviction on either side, a graceful exchange of letters took place between the two men towards the close of Tangye's life. They differed greatly to the last, but each recognised the other's services to Birmingham.

It would be easy to cite many passages from Richard Tangye's political speeches to show, if that were necessary, that he stood on the frontier line of progress. There was scarcely a public question before the country on which he did not express his views with characteristic vigour and directness. In many respects he was in advance of his times, notably in regard to the administration of Ireland and India, as well as on a great variety of social and educational problems.

Capitalist though he was, he was one of the first

advocates for the admission of working men to Parliament. He held there were far too many "lawyers, soldiers, and landlords in the House of Commons," and that they blocked the way to any substantial reform of the Poor Laws. Railway magnates, he also declared, were too much in evidence;—"What is wanted in Parliament is a few signalmen, railway guards and platelayers to give their experience and knowledge as a set-off to the excessive representation of their employers." He bore emphatic testimony on another occasion to the skill and discrimination with which working men, properly selected, handled public money. This was when the Parish Councils Bill was under discussion in 1893. Considerable fear was expressed at the time lest poor men would administer relief with insufficient caution.

"My experience amongst the working classes of Birmingham extends over forty years, and does not warrant such apprehension. Some years ago, there was great distress because of the prolonged winter, and the unusual severity of the weather. Relief funds were raised, the distribution of which was confided to the councillors for the various wards, who were aided by committees, upon which were many working men. In my capacity as councillor, I was chairman of one of these committees, and there was no single point connected with the administration of the fund with which I was so impressed as the capacity and shrewdness of the working-men members. They could not have been

more careful in giving relief if they had personally contributed every penny to the fund. It was in vain that the loafer or the drunken vagabond applied for help ; they were too well known to the artisan members of the committee, and with very little parley they were referred to the workhouse and its stone-yard. But there was another important service which these working men performed ; they brought to the knowledge of the committee cases of hardship and want amongst their neighbours,—uncomplaining people who would suffer the extremity of poverty, before they would apply either to a parish officer, or to a relief committee.”

He was also one of the first to urge, that working men of intelligence and character might with public advantage be appointed Magistrates. He pointed out that Justices of the Peace were supposed to be selected for their general intelligence, and also for the knowledge which they possess of the customs which regulate the relations between various classes of society. It therefore appeared to him that, particularly in the great centres of industrial life, the presence of intelligent artisans upon the Bench would strengthen the administration of justice by satisfying the working classes that the decisions arrived at were the result of a full and accurate knowledge of all the circumstances of the case. He advocated a judicious selection of such magistrates since he deemed that it would “tend to increase and consolidate that feeling of confidence in, and respect for, the law upon which the security and happiness

of the whole community mainly depended.” He wanted, of course, to bring the representatives of all classes together in common public work, for he held that a good many misapprehensions and prejudices, both on the side of property and labour, would vanish if men of independent means, and others dependent on manual toil, met on a footing of temporary equality.

As far back as 1892, when the fourth Gladstonian Administration was in process of formation, Richard Tangye in a letter addressed to one of the chief lieutenants of the Prime Minister, advocated the desirability of recognising the working classes of the country by the appointment, to some post in the Ministry, of a man prominently associated with their aspirations. In this connection he mentioned the name of Mr. John Burns, and suggested to the member of the new Cabinet whom he addressed, that it would be a wise course to appoint a man of such sterling character and ability to an Under-Secretaryship in the new Ministry. Mr. Burns was then at the beginning of his career in the House of Commons, and had just been returned as member for Battersea, and the adoption of such a course as Tangye proposed was set aside as impracticable. Richard Tangye lived long enough to see Mr. John Burns promoted to the rank of Cabinet Minister, and no one rejoiced more than he did when the man whom he wished to honour in 1892 came to power when the Campbell-Bannerman Administration took office in December 1905. He

rejoiced also in the appointment of Mr. Winston Churchill as Under-Secretary for the Colonies, and all the more because he was a brilliant recruit from the opposite camp. "I fought your father for all I was worth in the old days in Birmingham," were his words to the young statesman, in an interview at Downing Street, "and I am glad that I have not to fight his son." So to the last, for he was dying on his feet at the time, Richard Tangye kept his interest in politics.

CHAPTER XI

PUBLIC SPIRIT

First Art Gallery in Birmingham—A project for technical instruction deferred—Gifts of Richard and George Tangye to the new Art Gallery and the School of Art and Design—Great value of the School—Ungenerous criticism and a powerful retort—Richard Tangye's resignation of official positions — Changes in the firm—Public honour to Richard and George Tangye—Limitations of "Immortality."

STRANGERS to Birmingham are always impressed by the splendid public buildings of the city. The capital of the Midlands, apart from its fine Town Hall and stately municipal premises, is more perfectly equipped with institutions for the promotion of education and the development of arts and sciences, than any other provincial centre of the United Kingdom. The majority of them have been erected within the life-time of the present generation, and bear testimony to the remarkable growth of the community, not merely in population and wealth, but in civic enterprise and public spirit. Birmingham has been happy in the generosity of its inhabitants, and in the ranks of its benefactors

the names of Richard and George Tangye hold an honourable place. The Corporation Art Gallery and the School of Art will always be associated with their memory.

The first Art Gallery in Birmingham opened its doors on August 1, 1867. It was held in the Central Free Library, and the exhibition consisted of portraits and pictures, in the possession of the Corporation, and Works of Art, which had previously found a place in the Birmingham and Midland Institute, together with several gifts made at the time, and pictures borrowed from the authorities at South Kensington. It remained in existence as the Art Gallery and Museum, for it was felt from the first that in a town like Birmingham a collection of objects of industrial art was imperative in order to make the institution, in the best sense, educational to the community. The movement was dependent on voluntary subscriptions, and for some years its progress was slow, though one or two well-known men, like the late Clarkson Osler and John Henry Chamberlain, came to its assistance, and a certain sum of money was also raised by a general appeal to the town. The Art Gallery grew slowly and fitfully, but it was not yet, in any sense, worthy of Birmingham, and, as it grew, the building in which it was placed became inadequate, for the Central Library itself was also growing, and needed more accommodation for the books on its shelves. Eventually the Art Gallery was practically crowded out of its original home,

and for some years the collection of pictures, instead of being in one of the chief streets, was housed at Aston Hall, outside Birmingham.

John Henry Chamberlain was one of the most useful citizens that Birmingham ever possessed, and as an architect adorned the city with some of its noblest public buildings. He, more than any one else, was one of the chief advocates of the new movement, which grew until it became the college—it might almost be said the University—of the artisan classes of the community.

Every one in Birmingham felt that the absence of the art treasures from the town was a public misfortune. But Birmingham in those years was so busy with large municipal improvements in other directions, that the question was left in abeyance. Meanwhile Richard Tangye, who in the later seventies was in the thick of public work as Town Councillor, School Manager, and Guardian of the Poor, was more concerned that Birmingham should possess a worthy School of Art, where technical instruction could be given to all who cared to avail themselves of such an advantage. He recognised the importance of bringing back the Art Gallery to the town, and of providing for it, in some commanding position, a building adapted to its requirements. But, as a practical man, keenly alive to the necessity of skilled craftsmanship in all the directions in which Birmingham, through its manifold commercial activities, was concerned, a need more pressing than even the Art Gallery appealed

to him—the provision of a School of Art and Design, in which the youth of the community could be actually trained for their avocations.

There was already at this time a tentative effort in such a direction, but it was on altogether too contracted a scale, and was hidden away in small and ill-ventilated rooms. He therefore determined that such a state of things should no longer exist, and, without saying anything to others, he went far and wide in order to see for himself what was best to be done. He came back to Birmingham with a scheme in his mind for the erection of a new School of Art, on much wider and more progressive lines, and promptly enlisted the sympathy of his brother George Tangye in the project. They jointly determined that they would do something to bring Birmingham in this respect to the front, both realising that, if the good of the greatest number was to be recognised, nothing more beneficial to the community was possible.

Just as Richard Tangye was about to broach this proposal, he received one morning, as a Town Councillor, the usual official intimation of the subjects which were coming up for discussion at the next meeting of that gathering. He found that the most important proposal to be brought before the Council was a scheme for providing the Corporation with an Art Gallery. It was only, however, to be a temporary building—a mere makeshift to bring the collection of Aston Hall within easy reach of the people. He felt that this course, if adopted,

would prove, as he put it, a "great public misfortune." He believed that if a thing was worth doing, it was worth doing well, and he knew that if a mean temporary building was erected, the probable result would be that nothing further would be attempted "for another generation." There was no time to lose, as the decisive meeting was to be held within three days, so he promptly dropped his own cherished scheme about the School of Art, and, on the principle of following the line of the least resistance in public improvements, determined, there and then, to challenge Birmingham to arise and build, once for all, an Art Gallery worthy of the traditions of the town.

He therefore, in conjunction with his brother, offered the sum of £5000 in 1880 for the purchase of suitable objects, provided the Council would agree to build a permanent Art Gallery on a scale commensurate with the requirements of the town. He also promised, on behalf of himself and his brother, a further £5000 for the building if other people would respond to the same extent. In the letter in which this proposal was made, he said, "In making this offer we feel that while it is quite true that we have brought a large amount of new trade to the town, we have at the same time received great advantages from our connection with it. If our gift will help, in some degree, towards the establishment of an Art Gallery worthy of our adopted town, we shall be amply rewarded for any self-denial we may have exercised in making it."

So the ball was set rolling, and the result of Richard Tangye's offer was the erection of the existing magnificent Art Gallery on one of the most commanding sites in Birmingham.

There were difficulties in the way at the outset, for the Birmingham Council had no power to levy a rate for the purpose of such a building. But they were eventually overcome, and on July 19, 1881, the foundation-stone was laid by Mr. Richard Chamberlain, then mayor of Birmingham, who took the opportunity of saying that Messrs. Tangye, by their generous and unsolicited gift, were the pioneers of the movement. Richard Tangye made a speech on that occasion, in which he said : "What was it they proposed to accomplish ? He took it, the object they had in view was twofold. Their aim was to elevate and educate the tastes of the population generally, and also, as far as they were able, to place within the reach of the art students and art workers in the town some advantages, so long possessed by their continental brethren. He added that they confidently hoped that, by the treasures which they expected to gather together within the walls of the New Art Gallery, and by the aid also of a thoroughly effectual School of Art and Design, much of what was hitherto lacking in the training of their artisans would be provided."

The whole cost of the building was £45,000, for nothing was spared which could add to either its utility or beauty. It was opened by Edward VII.,

then Prince of Wales, on November 28, 1885, and it is claimed that no institution of the kind in the provinces has equalled it in the number of its visitors. The motto chosen for the building was, in view of its origin, assuredly appropriate—"By the gains of Industry, we promote Art."

Richard Tangye, in his speech at the laying of the foundation-stone of the Art Gallery which has already been cited, linked that great movement with the other scheme on which his heart was set. He spoke of the need, not merely of an Art Gallery, but of a School of Design. He believed in the educational value of pictures to the whole community, but was convinced that it was even more important, in view of the industrial requirements of the town, to provide, on an adequate scale, the practical training in arts and crafts which would place the rising generation of artisans in a better position to grapple with the claims of their own work. As soon, therefore, as the movement for the Art Gallery had been fairly launched, he began to take steps to carry out his original scheme.

The Birmingham Society of Arts and School of Design had been in existence since 1843, and had done excellent work, though in a comparatively small way, for a number of years. But, straitened by lack of means and the altogether inadequate rooms which it occupied, it had not kept pace with the ever-increasing demands of the community. A great many new commercial enterprises, of which the Cornwall Works was only one, had arisen in the

interval. The industrial and economic demands of the community had grown in the forty years since the School of Design was founded, in a manner, and in directions, with which the Institution, as it stood in 1881, was powerless to cope. No one in Birmingham recognised this more clearly than Richard Tangye, and, as soon as he was in a position to do something substantial to put matters on a better footing, he lost no time in bringing forward the scheme which he had waived in the interests of the Art Gallery.

The people had scarcely ceased to thank him for his splendid public spirit over that Institution when he came forward again, and offered, on behalf of Mr. George Tangye and himself, a further gift of £10,000 to build a new School of Art in Edmund Street. The amount required was £20,000, and a lady, Miss Louisa Ryland, promptly offered to provide the other £10,000 that was needed for the building, whilst the site was given by another public-spirited townsman, Mr. W. C. Colmore. The cost, as usual, exceeded the estimate, but the deficit was met at once by a further donation of about £2000 by Messrs. Richard and George Tangye.

The building contains nine spacious class-rooms besides machine, architectural, modelling, design, painting, and life rooms, and the course of instruction ranges from elementary work to the highest branches of art. This new School of Art has branches all over Birmingham, and its teaching staff supervises the instruction in drawing in all the

Board Schools. The value of this comprehensive scheme can scarcely be overstated, since it means that all the rate-aided art instruction of Birmingham, instead of being fitfully pursued or left to chance, is under the administrative control of one central and properly equipped body. The School of Art is now partly supported out of the funds of the free libraries rate, and is directly under the control of the Corporation.

Nothing in his closing days gave Richard Tangye more satisfaction than the knowledge that he was the first to place so valuable an institution in a position which enabled it to take a real and ever-widening part in the work of technical training in the capital of the Midlands. He lived long enough to see it become a great power in Birmingham, and to minister, in a thousand directions, to the progress of its inhabitants.

He laid the foundation-stone of the new building in 1884, and, in doing so, said he believed that it would not merely add to that common elevation of taste which comes with culture, but would show its practical worth in the character of the work produced in the workshops of Birmingham. He met with ungenerous criticisms, and was charged with trying to buy the goodwill of the community—an accusation which provoked widespread indignation. There were even people who said that, as a religious man, he ought to have given more money to the building of chapels and the support of missions. Those words drew from him a detailed

statement, which might well have abashed his critics.

Here it is possible to quote one of his private letters : " The days have gone by when God sends manna for the subsistence of his creatures. He works by his instruments, and when working men ask for their daily bread, it appears to me that, if it is put into the heart of those who have been blest with means to help their fellows by providing them with education in aid of their daily work, instead of spending their money in luxurious living, they are no less doing their duty than are those who go forth in the highways and byways preaching the Gospel."

These words are cited because they reveal the spirit of the man. He held his money, in a sense, and to a degree which is true of few people, as a talent, for the right use of which he would one day have to give an account. He believed in applied Christianity just as much as in applied mathematics. He detested shoddy sentimentalism as much as he detested shoddy work, and hence he lived in the realm of philanthropy, as well as in the realm of business—to borrow Milton's words—" As ever in the great Taskmaster's eye." The principles on which his life was built were deep and thorough ; they came out in all that he did and said, and they lent the unity of an undivided allegiance to duty to his simple, open, and kindly personality. Amongst sayings which he was fond of quoting were the words, " I shall pass through this world but once ;

any good thing therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now, for I shall not pass this way again."

He had already taken upon himself new responsibilities in connection with the Cornwall Works. His elder brothers had long ago retired from the concern, and the style of the firm was changed on January 1, 1882, to Tangyes, Limited, of which he became chairman, a position which he held until his death. Little was changed except the name, and no offer of shares was made to the public. This business was what it remains to-day, a private concern. The object of the change was twofold; it allowed Richard and George Tangye to introduce their sons into the business as "shareholders," before investing them with the authority attached to partnership in a private enterprise. They desired them to earn their spurs before they wore them, and wanted also to give a small interest in the business to several of the managers and foremen, who had proved both loyal and capable.

In 1882 Richard Tangye was compelled to realise that he could no longer meet the strain imposed by public work, if he was to give due attention to the ever-widening demands of his own business. He therefore resigned his position on the Town Council, and, in doing so, said, "I have long held the opinion that no greater honour can be conferred upon a citizen of a great community like this than that he should be chosen by those amongst

whom he lives to represent them on a local governing body. I heartily thank you for enabling me to take some part in carrying out the great and beneficent public works, which have raised Birmingham so much in the estimation of the whole country." Wide regret was expressed at this decision, on the ground that his retirement was a distinct loss to all classes of the community.

When the matter came before the Birmingham Corporation, the Mayor of Birmingham moved the following resolution, after laying stress on the unusual compliment which it implied. "That this Council receives with regret the announcement of the resignation of their esteemed colleague Councillor Richard Tangye, and desires to acknowledge their high appreciation of his generous efforts in the cause of education, and his able and zealous co-operation in promoting the best interests of the borough during his too brief connection with this Council."

The resolution was seconded by Alderman Kenrick, who took occasion to express the regret that was universally felt that failure of health was the cause which compelled Richard Tangye to quit a post which he had held with so much advantage to the town. He added they could never forget the magnificent donations they had received, since they had led to the establishment of an Art Gallery, destined not only to be of great service to the borough, but also to give pleasure to its inhabitants, and moreover, he had no doubt, to add very

considerably to the prosperity of the town. The resolution was unanimously carried. It was an unusual tribute, but Birmingham thought that it was not less opportune than merited.

Richard Tangye also resigned his position on the Smethwick School Board for the same reason. In making this announcement to the chairman he wrote: "There is no public work in which I find so deep and abiding an interest as the work of education, and it will always be a satisfaction to me that I had some part in carrying out a system of national education, which, I believe, is destined to exert a greater and more beneficial influence than any parliamentary measure that has been passed in our time. There is one subject to which I should like to be permitted to draw the attention of the Board, namely, the desirability of providing an efficient system of science teaching in these schools. I have taken a great interest in the work which is being done in this direction by the Birmingham School of Arts, and am of opinion that it would be difficult to overestimate its importance. Almost all the children passing through the Board Schools become engaged in one or other of the manufacturing industries of the district, and it needs no argument to demonstrate the advantage which must accrue to all classes from their possessing scientific knowledge of the properties of the materials on which they work, and the laws governing their manipulation. If the Board could see their way to the provision of an efficient system of science

teaching—on the lines adopted by the Birmingham School of Arts—my brother and I would feel inclined to contribute one half the science lecturer's salary for five years." This offer was gladly accepted.

In other directions Richard Tangye did a great deal to further the cause of education in Birmingham, for the most part in conjunction with his brother George. Anxious that students of design should have the best examples of beauty of form and colour, the brothers gave a magnificent collection of Wedgwood ware, consisting of vases, busts, bas-reliefs, medallions, cameos, and plaques, including a replica of the greatest achievement of the illustrious potter, the Barberini or Portland Vase—the most perfect ceramic work of any age or country. These gifts were made by Richard and George Tangye to the Birmingham Art Gallery, so that young craftsmen and other students of design might have access to the best examples.

Richard and George Tangye, in memory of the great services to Birmingham of John Henry Chamberlain—who was not a relative of the statesman—also presented the Art Gallery with the late Albert Moore's picture *The Dreamers*; and in order to commemorate the public services of John Shirrow Wright—the founder of the Hospital Saturday movement—to whom a monument was erected in the town in 1883, which was unveiled by John Bright, they founded a valuable scholarship for competition amongst students at Mason College, Birmingham.

In the autumn of 1885 a movement sprang up amongst the working classes of Birmingham to do honour to Richard and George Tangye. It culminated, on December 30, in that year, in a great meeting in the Town Hall, with the mayor in the chair. An address was made and presented to them, bearing upwards of five thousand signatures. The Art Gallery and the School of Arts had then only been open in their new and beautiful quarters for a few months, but the mayor was able to announce that, within that time, upwards of a quarter of a million people had passed through the turnstiles of the first of these great institutions, whilst the second promised to enable Birmingham to hold its own in artistic craftsmanship with any city in Europe.

The address itself expressed the unstinted admiration of the working classes for the public-spirited deeds which it recorded, and, not least, for the establishment of scholarships in connection with the School Board. Richard Tangye in his reply said, there were two kinds of honours—honours which come from a distance and were conferred by those who knew but little of the recipients, and who knew that little at second hand, and there were honours conferred by the community in which a man lived. At Birmingham, at any rate, it could never again be said that “knowledge was a steep which few might climb,” since it was no longer the privilege of the few, but was free as the air they breathed, and the common heritage of all. He

cited a letter which he had received from a young working man, which began, "You and your brother have done a splendid work. You have immortalised yourselves." Then the writer, feeling he had perhaps gone too far, added, "at any rate, for half a century." Richard Tangye with characteristic humour declared, "If their immortality lasted as long as that, it seemed to him that they might be well content, for he could not help thinking that fifty was above, rather than below, the average of what was commonly meant by such a phrase."

There is no need, after such a record as has been given in the last few pages, to wonder that Richard Tangye was described in the local newspapers as perhaps the most respected man in the community. The secret of it all was that he was continually thinking about other people, and that gave him a place in the esteem of his neighbours of which any man might well be proud.

CHAPTER XII

NOTES OF TRAVEL

Richard Tangye's visits to Australia—Impressions of places and people—The waters of the Mediterranean—Backsheesh in Egypt—The great pyramid—Heliopolis, Memphis, Bulak, and Alexandria—Traffic in the Suez Canal—A mine "twelve miles deep"—Trade and institutions of Melbourne—Colonial affinity to the Tory Party—The great need of Australia—Attractions of Sydney—Drawbacks in Tasmania—Possibilities of New Zealand—Honolulu—San Francisco compared with Melbourne—English gold at Utah—Comparison of economic conditions in the United States and England—American Factories.

BUSINESS and pleasure took Richard Tangye often abroad, but he knew nothing of Europe until the long strain imposed by the building up of the great concern in Birmingham was beginning to relax. In other words, he stuck to his post until success was assured. Short trips to the continent, in the early years of his life as a Birmingham manufacturer, did not greatly attract him, probably in part because he was not a linguist, and if there was one thing beyond all others that he enjoyed it was familiar talk. He was far too independent to care to be personally conducted anywhere, and he

preferred, in consequence, to move about England on his holidays, and especially to get back to the Cornish coast, where he could recall, with unsophisticated sons of the soil, the days of his youth. But when the opportunity came to plant outposts of trade in the Colonies, where he was exempt from the disabilities of alien speech, he gladly seized it. In Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and other far distant places he made his own welcome, besides gathering experience of the world, and came back enriched with friendships, which lasted to the end of his days. He delighted to travel, in short, under the English flag, and to meet people thousands of miles from home who were kindred spirits and spoke his mother tongue.

He made the long voyage to Australia eight times, and he always came back not merely refreshed in body and mind, but with a deepened sense of the wonderful resources, present and prospective, of Greater Britain. His first voyage was made by way of the Cape of Good Hope, and lasted ninety days, but the majority were made by the now familiar route through the Suez Canal, and this gave him an opportunity to break his journey, in order to see Egypt. His first visit was made in 1876, in the company of his friend Dr. J. A. Langford, of Birmingham, who went thither to collect information on the educational system adopted in the Colonies. His last visit was made in 1904, in order to see his daughter, Mrs. Chambers, who was settled in New Zealand. He knew the Colonies,

therefore, so far as a stranger can know them, for upwards of a quarter of a century, and very little in their economic, political, and social life escaped his quick eyes.

All through his life he carried a note-book, and jotted down his impressions of places and people from day to day, and it is this which makes his recollections both valuable and vivid. He filled many note-books with his reminiscences of travel, and dashed off many letters from abroad, which still exist, and admirably reflect the mood of the hour. He published, in 1883, a volume of “Reminiscences of Travel in Australia, America, and Egypt,” which passed through several editions, and from its pages, in part, though still more from unpublished material in the shape of letters and journals, it is possible to give examples of his shrewd observations, and not a few of the amusing stories which he picked up on his way round the world. Australasia, as he himself used to say, is now so well known to everybody that there is no need to give a detailed account of his experiences in that part of the globe. It is enough to pick out, from a great mass of material, the earliest passages, laying stress on those which seem likely to serve best the purpose of this book—the revelation of the man himself. Matters of purely commercial significance may be left alone, since statistics become quickly obsolete in young countries which are swiftly growing.

Richard Tangye, as a business man, was alert and alive to his finger-tips, and saw and seized, to

the infinite advantage of the Cornwall Works, and, what is more, to the general prosperity of England, the chances of development in the commercial sense. From the first he was much more than a commercial traveller, with the authority of a great firm at his back. He was a warm-hearted, public-spirited man, responsive in every fibre of his being to the claims of humanity, and keenly anxious, whether at home or abroad, to do everything in his power to knit England and her scattered children more closely together. Sympathy apart—it was delicate, generous, and unconventional in its manifestations—he carried everywhere his love of justice and his sense of humour, to say nothing of his racy speech, and the power, which never left him, of getting straight to the heart of things. His bright, kindly face was an attraction to all and sundry; no man needed less to carry letters of recommendation. He made his own welcome wherever he went by witty talk and genial manners, as well as by that consideration for others which never deserted him, except when he encountered hopelessly pompous, or ill-conditioned people.

Dipping into his note-book and letters, it is possible to give first of all his impressions of places and a few typical experiences of travel, and then in a subsequent chapter to add his impressions of people whom he met on ship-board, or in the course of his wanderings across the sea. The best plan to pursue seems to be to follow him on a voyage down the Mediterranean, halting with him in

Egypt, and then passing through the Suez Canal, calling at Aden, and then making the long voyage across the Indian Ocean to Sydney and Melbourne, places from which it is possible to explore much that is interesting in Australia. Afterwards we shall gain a glimpse of Tasmania with his eyes, and then, taking ship again, proceed to New Zealand, making the homeward voyage by Honolulu to San Francisco, crossing the American continent, and returning from New York to Liverpool.

He used to say, even as far back as 1884, that he had a tolerably wide acquaintance with the sea, since he had travelled by ocean sixty thousand miles, but in the last twenty years of his life his record in that direction was vastly increased. Stay-at-home folks, he declared, usually think of the Mediterranean as a sunlit sea, blue as the famous grotto of Capri. But that was not his experience of it, except on one occasion near Alexandria, when the water was an intense turquoise blue, so lovely that the attention of the whole ship's company was arrested by it. But the weather can be very boisterous in that great inland sea, and his abiding impression of it was not so agreeable—though he traversed its length again and again—as of the Indian Ocean and the sunlit waters of the Pacific.

Egypt stirred his enthusiasm, as it does that of every man who possesses a spark of imagination, and Cairo not least of all, the city where the "East shakes hands with the West," with its far-reaching memories, its mosques, and minarets, its narrow

ancient streets, its broad, modern boulevards, and its subtle historical appeal. He was amused, too, with its endless appeal for backsheesh. At all the great show places, like the Mosque of Sultan Hassan, the Citadel, and the Pyramids of Gizeh, beggars are stationed. "Some were loud, almost menacing in their demands, others soft and insinuating." But all of them were insistent, and not to be shaken off, without the passing tribute of a coin. The worst variety were those who came up confidentially, and whispered that they were good men, hinting, at the same time, that the rest of the gang deserved to be described by another name. But good or bad, it all ended in backsheesh.

He declared that if you wanted to understand Biblical allusions, it was necessary to travel in the East. "The constant extending of the palm for backsheesh gave me an entirely new appreciation of the passage—Ethiopia shall yet stretch forth the hand." With his quick eye for measurements, Richard Tangye speedily noted that the great pyramid occupied an area almost equal in extent to Lincoln's Inn Fields in London, and that its height was about sixty feet greater than the cross on St. Paul's Cathedral. What amazed him was the manner in which sturdy beggars submitted to chastisement from the guide who accompanied the party: "Truly the stick is a great institution in Egypt, although perhaps none but the ruling class would acquiesce in the inscription found in one of the ancient tombs, to the effect that 'The

stick came down from heaven—a blessing from God.’ ”

He made a pilgrimage to Heliopolis, and saw the obelisk, which was old when Abraham came into the country, and duly deplored the sacrilege of tourists, who had defaced its surface by chipping bits to carry away. He saw Memphis, the ancient capital of the country, once a city six miles in extent, and now a waste and desolate place, despoiled of the stones of its palace and temples to build the new city of Cairo. He describes the National Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, then at Bulak, as one of the most interesting sights in the land of the Pharaohs. “Much of the sculpture is really marvellous in its life-like character. One of the most remarkable statues is of wood, and is said to be four thousand years old. It is admirably carved.” He had his adventures in the bazaars, and overheard “one old rascal” offer his guide a handsome commission on his purchases. After that he was not to be moved by the blandishments of sellers of embroideries of gold and silver thread, and all sorts of quaint and useless articles.

Alexandria he saw, both as a prosperous town and in the days of its desolation after its bombardment, and the contrast was pitiful. He trod upon the foot of a dragoman in getting off a mule, and the man howled dismally though little hurt. It was too good an opportunity to be lost for backsheesh. “So there is still corn in Egypt, my friend,” was Richard Tangye’s characteristic remark.

The Suez Canal led him to reflect that the French are much more truly a nation of shopkeepers than the English, notwithstanding Napoleon's famous epithet. "They failed to see"—the words were written in 1882—"that three sixpences are better than one shilling, and they are consequently unwilling to surrender present advantages without an absolute certainty of an early and great benefit arising from their doing so." He thought then that what was wanted was a new Suez Canal, and predicted that if it were made it would take four-fifths of the traffic away from the old. Six years after the Canal was opened, the English traffic was twelve times that of the French, and no wonder, for the distance between London and Bombay had been lessened by 44 per cent. Aden he describes as a dreadful place, without one single redeeming quality, except as a coaling-station.

A long ocean voyage, like that from Colombo to Sydney, has its comedy and sometimes its tragedy as well. He gives many amusing details of chance encounters with fellow passengers. One oracular person stated that miners had not yet succeeded in getting more than twelve miles deep! "I ventured to ask him where the mine was situated of which he had spoken. He answered testily, 'I was not speaking of any particular mine.'" This clergyman took himself seriously, and not least when a discussion arose amongst the passengers on the vexed question of how to get working men to attend church. He declared airily that all classes and condi-

tions of people came to hear him, and added that he took no special means to secure their presence. Richard Tangye was puzzled at this, for he had sat under this divine in the course of the voyage on Sundays without being impressed in the least by his eloquence. The mystery was solved when the ship was in port, for then it transpired that the clergyman was chaplain to a cemetery.

The people who were his mortal antipathy were lusty young fellows who lolled in deck-chairs all day and became lively at night, "perambulating the decks with heavy heels until the small hours of the morning," to the supreme discomfort of those who were trying to catch sleep in the cabins below. He gives a graphic description of a man in delirium tremens, chasing a diminutive doctor round the ship, with the intention of throwing him overboard. This poor fellow died at sea, and his body, weighted with lead, went down into the great waters.

On one of his voyages to Australia, he saw a good deal of an Irish priest, who proved to be a genial and amusing man. One day on deck the priest told him that he had had a disappointment that morning. The sea had given him a hearty appetite and he had ordered a chop for breakfast, to which he sat down with much satisfaction. He had just taken up his knife and fork when two nuns, who were seated in the saloon opposite to him, looked at him with amazement and reproach. "Shure, and what's the matter now?" said he. The nuns

reminded him that he had forgotten the day of the week, which was Friday. The disappointed priest pushed his plate from him with the not unnatural exclamation, "Shure, and ye might have tould me afther."

Melbourne, with its fine broad streets, noble buildings, splendid shops, and vast warehouses, was a continual delight to him. The great city had grown up in his own lifetime, for he was a child of five when the place received its name, in 1837, in honour of the statesman who was the first Prime Minister of Queen Victoria. Its marvellous progress and prosperity in his own lifetime caught the imagination of Richard Tangye. He looked upon it as a veritable triumph of democratic principles, and what pleased him most of all was the evidence on every side of the public spirit of its citizens. The University, the Free Library—of which he was a benefactor—the Town Hall, the Public Gardens, the Art Gallery, the Hospital, and the Museum stirred his enthusiasm—the whole place seemed an object-lesson in what the English race could accomplish at the ends of the earth, under free and untrammelled conditions.

"As in the other Australian colonies, education has been taken up in a vigorous and thorough manner and the state schools are a credit to the Colony. Happily, no fear exists as to the policy of thoroughly educating the people; on the contrary, it is commonly recognised that the future prosperity of the State—indeed its very existence—

depends upon the universal diffusion of knowledge." He gives a graphic description of the sights of Melbourne, and tells more than one quaint story concerning the legislature.

He found colonial hotels, however, rather a trial. The majority of them then were third-rate in everything but their charges, which were first-rate. The hot winds, which brought with them choking clouds of dust, were another drawback, especially in the height of summer. They reminded him of a blast from a foundry when iron is being melted, and when they swept along the wide streets it was good to take shelter. But he liked the people, with their hearty manners, their genial, if sometimes brusque, independence, and their racy speech. Birmingham stands high in the estimation of Melbourne, and at that time it was especially so, for John Bright was its member, and in the colonies just then his name was one to conjure with, since he was the champion of the old doctrines of peace, retrenchment and reform, as well as a most eloquent advocate of Free Trade. At the same time, Richard Tangye was compelled to admit—what is clear to every one now, in spite of widespread personal admiration for men like Gladstone and Bright—the existence of a reactionary note in Australian politics; and here it may be as well to fall back on his own words, though it must be remembered that much has happened since 1882.

"During many visits to the Colonies, I have always been struck with the unmistakable pre-

vailing sentiment of the Colonies as regards the politics of the Old Country; for, while there are no more democratic communities in the whole world than the Australian Colonies, and although they owe their institutions to the Liberal Party in England, their affinity to the Tory Party—the sworn foe of democratic institutions in England—is infinitely greater than to Liberalism, which gave them free institutions. And when you ask the more intelligent colonists how this state of things comes about, you will quickly find that it is not because they love Toryism, or that they are under any illusions as to its tendencies, but because their natural political allies of the Liberal Party have almost uniformly shown a marked indifference to their sentiments and aspirations. The colonists feel that, in times gone by, the action of the Liberal Party has been too much like that of a stepmother whose great aim is supposed to be to cut adrift the children of her predecessor as soon as possible. But while the natural affinity of Colonial politics is sufficiently obvious, in one respect their tendency is more towards Toryism, viz., in the Colonial attitude towards subject races. Repression has always been the essence of Toryism, but it has not been a necessity of the situation in England, except for party purposes, while in the Colonies it has been so to a very large extent.”

He lays stress on the fact that what the Colonies most need is a larger population, and he could cite plenty of evidence that the manufacturers in

that part of the world require a larger field for their productions. But Australia is the working-man's paradise, and, unfortunately, the majority of those who live by labour are jealous of any wide scheme of emigration, because, as a result of competition, they dread less wages, and seem blind to the undeveloped resources of a country which could very well maintain a greatly increased population of the right sort of people.

At Sydney, no less than at Melbourne, Richard Tangye felt at home, for in both places he had established outposts of the Cornwall Works, and wherever he went people seemed to know all about him, both as an engineer, and an employer of labour, who had the suffrages of the working classes. "Every one has heard of the extreme beauty of the glorious harbour of Sydney. The entrance is about a mile in width between bold cliffs, two hundred and fifty feet in height. It has a coastline of more than two hundred and fifty miles, and is full of beautiful creeks and bays, with banks finely wooded to the water's edge, and handsome villas, picturesquely placed at every point of vantage." He thought the old town, with its narrow crooked streets, badly planned, though there is not a house in it which was built before the reign of George III. The modern city has many fine buildings, notably the Government Offices, the Cathedral, the Town Hall and the Post Office—the latter a building which he was candid enough to admit was vastly superior to the new Post Office in

Birmingham. But it was the public schools and the Botanical Gardens which impressed him most in the oldest city in Australia. He was greatly interested in the Sydney Free Library, to which he presented a copy of the First Folio edition of Shakespeare's Plays.

His description of the mining community at Ballarat, and the life of squatters in the Australian Bush, are marked by the quick observation and genial humour, which were typical of the man. In Victoria he came across a man who had long owed him £50, and who told him, with a touch of pride, that he had just been nominated for Parliament, and that he intended to pay that sum out of his first quarter's salary, as a responsible politician. He failed, however, to secure election. But to his credit he met his obligations like a man.

In Tasmania, what impressed him most was the hospitality of the people, the size of the farms, the excellence of the roads, and the romantic beauty of the scenery. The drawbacks there are the difficulty of getting labour, and the prevalence of the rabbit and the thistle. The rabbit was introduced for purposes of sport, and has increased and multiplied to such an extent as to prove a veritable pest. The thistle, so the tradition runs, was introduced into the colony by a patriotic Scotsman, who probably did not live long enough to lament his national enthusiasm, though other people have had good cause to regret his misplaced

ardour. "The roads in Tasmania were made by convict labour, but that is a subject on which the present generation is a little sensitive, and one which the stranger, if he is wise, leaves discreetly alone."

After all, New Zealand was the country which most interested Richard Tangye. He visited it again and again, and his last voyage was undertaken when his health was rapidly waning. His notebooks and letters are full of descriptions of the colony, and especially of the Hot-lake country, the terraces, and the manners and customs of the Maoris. Auckland he describes as a busy, thriving place, with a magnificent harbour, and a look of solid comfort. "At the back of the city is Mount Eden, with an extinct volcano, the crater of which it is proposed to cement and use as a reservoir. Inside the city boundaries it is said there are about a dozen other extinct volcanoes. Let us hope they will never 'resume' operations."

He thought the Maoris were distinguished by all but universal laziness. Except in the northern portion of the island, not one in twenty of the natives will work at anything. "It takes next to nothing to keep them alive and to get what will do it by extorting money from visitors, in showing the hot-springs, sulphur baths, and the like, and so long as they can keep alive, that is all they want. Then, when things get to a low ebb, instead of working on their common land, they sell a slice of it, and place the proceeds in the hands of a store-keeper,

who is generally the publican, and feast as long as the money lasts, and then half starve. Yet the land is as fertile as it can be, and it will grow anything, but the people cannot get even milk enough for their own wants, actually importing and using Swiss milk in the very paradise of pasture-lands. The soil belongs to all, so none will work upon it, and misery and squalor reign. If any one wants to see what communism is, and what it leads to, let him come to New Zealand and study Maori life." What impressed him most in New Zealand was the vast extent of rich and fertile land, lying idle. New roads are everywhere needed to open up the country, and if they were constructed on the broad scale, and more reasonable concessions made by the Government to prospective settlers, New Zealand, with its magnificent climate and luxuriant soil, ought soon to take its place as one of the most prosperous colonies in the world.

Honolulu, the capital of the Sandwich Islands, was so attractive and beautiful a place, that he wished he could have spent a month in that part of the world. Always fond of little folks, he soon made friends with the dark-eyed, copper-coloured, merry children, who romped about the streets, but grew suddenly demure and shy in the presence of strangers. The men struck him as sharp, lithe, handsome fellows, with a keen eye for business, and the women, even of the labouring classes, walked with a grace and dignity which he thought any lady—rank at

discretion—might envy. The rich tropical vegetation, the profusion of flowers of the most brilliant colours, to say nothing of the perfect climate and the fresh breezes from the sea, made it a delight to linger in that little oasis in the Pacific. His bookish instincts were gratified by the discovery of a tolerably good library, as well as the nucleus of an excellent museum. But the native race seemed dying out, and the finances of the country, when he visited it, were in a deplorable condition, though there seemed no lack of pretty villas in the outskirts of the town, as well as other proofs of private, if not public, prosperity. The ship left Honolulu on a bright moonlight night, and, after a pleasant voyage, she dropped her anchor in the harbour of San Francisco.

Comparisons on a journey so extended are, of course, inevitable. Richard Tangye thought that San Francisco, in spite of its handsome streets, fine buildings and mammoth hotels, was not equal to Melbourne, though it looked more prosperous, and the stir of business in it was certainly more marked, whilst in point of climate it had the advantage. His letters and journals show how keenly interested he was in the Chinese Quarter. There were 40,000 Orientals at the time of his visit, and most of them were capable, frugal, industrious fellows. They contrive to save on small wages, and spend next to nothing except on opium. The Chinese are accused, he states, of having brought with them a number of objectionable practices, but,

to a man who knew the condition of the lower classes in American cities, it did not appear possible that they could be much worse than their neighbours. John Chinaman is not too popular with the working man of America, because he brings down the price of labour, and that probably counts, in part at least, for the bad character that they give him. In a Chinese shop in San Francisco, Richard Tangye had an odd experience. He had made a number of purchases, and, as they were bulky, the celestial tradesman asked for his address. When he saw the name he at once claimed the customer as a fellow countryman. It seems there is a town in China called Tang-y, and the man pretended to be under the impression that the stranger hailed from it.

After leaving San Francisco by the Pacific railway, the way across the continent lay through some of the most magnificent scenery in the world, and the iron horse reached an altitude of 8000 feet. For about a thousand miles the winding, wonderful iron-road lay open to the prairie, and, as cattle continually stray on to it, the cow-catcher on the locomotive was by no means unnecessary. At Ogden, he left the main route to pay a short visit to Salt Lake City, and saw the famous sulphur springs, as well as a few typical examples of the "saints." At Utah, to his surprise, English gold was rudely refused in payment for an hotel bill. The landlord was told that the traveller had exhausted his greenbacks, but he churlishly declined to accept Queen Victoria's

effigy in precious metal. At last, as the train was just due, Richard Tangye politely informed him that, under the circumstances, he would pay the bill the next time he came that way, though he was not quite sure when that would be. This solved the difficulty, for the man quickly said, "I guess, I'll take your gold."

The rest of the way followed the beaten track. Chicago, Detroit, Niagara, along the shores of Lake Ontario and down the Hudson, and so on to New York. There is no need to linger over his impressions of that familiar route. It is more to the purpose to sum up in a few words what he thought of economic conditions. "It is worthy of note that, while under protection the earnings of the producing class in the United States have been steadily declining, colossal fortunes, amounting to twenty or thirty millions sterling, have been built up by individual monopolists. On the other hand, during the same period, but under Free Trade, there has been a wider distribution of material comfort in England, and, as shown by official returns, a decided decrease in the number of millionaires." He noticed that in the villages, along the banks of the Hudson, more children without shoes and stockings were to be seen going to school than could be encountered in any part of England of the same area. He came to the conclusion that America, after all, might fairly claim to be a land of freedom—for tongue and foot.

The working classes, it is true, receive higher

wages than in England, but that does not benefit them, as the advantage is lost by the extra cost of living. Moreover, the hours of labour are longer, and the climate takes more out of a man. He saw a great deal to admire in the United States, and not least the wonderful chances which continually present themselves to men of brains and energy. He recognised to the hilt the hard, practical enterprising character of the people, their sturdy independence, their facility of resource, their inventive skill, their power to work. But he held that England was a better place to live in, and that liberty under the Union Jack, after all, was more perfect than under the Stars and Stripes. We might not in this country make so much parade of it, he added, but it was more real.

He did not profess to understand the whole industrial position in the States, but, as a practical man of business, he saw that in the engineering trade, which he knew best, the Americans, in spite of their nimble wits in the improvement of their machinery, had still a good deal to learn. He came from the engineering sheds, after a thorough inspection of a good many of the chief works of that kind in the States, with a deep impression not of scamped work, but of bad tools. He found the tools so indifferent, and the conditions under which the work was done so defective, that his only surprise was that either good or cheap work was possible. He came back from his long and many wanderings on the American Continent, and in the British

colonies at the uttermost parts of the earth, more enamoured of England than ever before. But he never returned home without new ideas and valuable hints, which he turned, with characteristic energy, to good account at the Cornwall Works.

CHAPTER XIII

WHY LAUGHTER REIGNED AT GLENDORGAL

Richard Tangye in mixed company—Salvation Lass and the sceptic—Salvation Lass and “soft heads”—“Sweeps”—Unfriendly criticism of Radicals—Attack on John Bright—Limitations of coasting-vessels—Sermons “dearer than life”—A member of the Self-Help Society—A cheat detected—Adventure of a lightning-conductor—Ready wit of a negro—Ex-pugilist missionary—A vicar and his dog—“Ten thousand blessings”—“No wages for a fortnight”—Society of the White Rose and a portrait of Cromwell.

RICHARD TANGYE in his travels, whether by sea or land, was alive to the comedy of life. Little escaped his keen, kindly eyes, and wherever he went he enlarged his circle of friends, for sympathy and humour always have that effect in this dull world. His talk was racy, incisive and kindly; he was equipped with an unusual store of capital stories, and he told them with a vivacity that was contagious. It was impossible not to admire his simple honesty, his wealth of experience, his wit, which could be sarcastic on occasion, though its habitual expression was controlled by genuine kindness. When he was forced into uncongenial

company, and that chiefly happened when he was cribbed, cabined, and confined on a long voyage, he relapsed into a silence, which was itself significant, or blazed out into protest if coarseness was the prevailing note, though usually he would get up and leave the company, always preferring solitude to the strife of loose tongues.

But it not unfrequently happened under such circumstances that people would follow him and give him their confidences—indeed few men ever received more disclosures of this kind, walking the deck or leaning over the bulwarks of a ship. The odd thing was that the most unlikely people, even those whom he had been inclined to avoid, drew up to him, and that in itself was a tribute to his strong, tender, cleanly-cut character. He never concealed his convictions in any company; perhaps sometimes he trailed his coat. But the outcome of it was that men of all sorts and conditions instinctively trusted him and felt that it was good to be at his side.

He used to tell a good story of a Salvation Lass, whom he met on one of the river boats in Australia. He went up to her in his jaunty, breezy way, and tried to draw the girl into conversation, but she had her own experiences—not all of them happy—of chance encounters, and was a little defiant at such freedom of address. So he said, "There's a lady on board who will give me a testimonial of good character," and forthwith introduced her to his wife. Then the

ice was broken, and presently the talk grew confidential.

The girl told him that on the streets of Melbourne she had been stopped by a man, brimful of cheap and sceptical arguments, who tried to entangle her in her talk. He laid stress on what he called the absurdity of the Old Testament miracles, and she grew a little bewildered at his fluency. So she drew herself up, and said that, for her part, she pinned her faith to the Old Book from cover to cover. "Well but, Miss," said the assailant, "what about that story of Jonah and the whale, you surely cannot believe it?" She stoutly maintained her position, and the man rattled on to such an extent that presently she cut him short. "It's plain to me you need salvation but you do not want it. There are people who do want it. I am on the King's business and cannot stay." And she began to move off. Then, as a parting shot, came the final sneer about the ridiculous position of the disobedient prophet. So the girl came back for a moment. "Now I'll just tell you what I'll do. As soon as I get to Heaven I'll ask Jonah if that story is true." "Oh, yes," came the retort, "that's all very fine, but what if he isn't there?" "In that case," came the quick retort, "you can ask him."

Another Salvation Lass of his acquaintance, when the movement was still young, was in a railway carriage—the only woman amongst a group of men and boys. She was a fresh-looking, pretty girl,

and sat demurely. Presently her companions began to make personal remarks, not addressed to her but about her, the burden of which was, that it was a grievous pity that a good-looking girl should disfigure herself with an old-fashioned poke-bonnet. The situation was growing embarrassing when the train drew up at her destination. The girl briskly alighted, and was just shutting the door after her, when one of the men called out. "I say, Miss, you won't go away without giving us your blessing." "Certainly not," was the unexpected response, as she looked in at the window, "May the Lord make your hearts as soft as your heads."

During long ocean-voyages there is usually some one on board ship who contrives to make himself ridiculous. Richard Tangye, on one occasion, when bound for Australia, had for a fellow passenger a supercilious young fellow of aristocratic birth, who kept studiously aloof from everybody until the voyage was nearly over. He confided to one of the officers of the ship that there really was no one on board who was fit company for a gentleman. "One day I was sitting on deck, with many others, reading, when, to the surprise of all, this young man came up, paper and pencil in hand, and asked me if I would join in the 'sweep'—a lottery as to the number of miles run in the previous twenty-four hours. Affecting not to understand him, I replied, 'I have nothing to do with sweeps,' and went on reading. He did not try again."

Another chance encounter was with a certain

major, who had fought in the Indian Mutiny, and who, like Richard Tangye himself, was making a holiday-trip to New Zealand. When he saw the name of Richard Tangye on the passenger list, he told some one at his elbow that he felt sure he would prove a disagreeable fellow traveller, for he had always associated that name with those of Chamberlain, Bradlaugh, and people of that sort. He had expected, he went on to say, to find a "loud, blatant, dogmatic, disturbing person," and was somewhat taken aback to find that the man who walked the deck did not answer to that description. They had long chats together on various subjects, and, though they differed in their opinions on almost every question that arose, they kept the peace.

The major had one passion at least, which Richard Tangye did not share, and presently he began to lose his money at cards, and, in consequence, to lose his temper as well. He abused his partner at whist in particular, and all the world in general. Presently he emptied the vials of his wrath on the Radicals. He declared they were pledged to overturn every institution in the land, whether good or bad. He asserted that Gladstone would sell his soul for six months of power and that John Bright was the greatest liar in England. This last remark proved too much for Richard Tangye, and he launched out into a sharp and energetic protest against such false accusations. Matters were not mended when the major went on to complain of the coarse language used by Radicals,

and to express his hatred of the education given to the working classes. There was what the reporters call a scene, and the relations between the men were distinctly strained for the rest of the voyage.

The coasting-vessels between Melbourne and Auckland have their drawbacks. "The notice in our cabin states, 'Gents are requested not to wear their boots on the beds.' What I want to know is where we are to put our boots at night when we do not wear them, when all the space,—three feet square—is wanted for our clothes. I am fast coming to the conclusion that, in travelling about this world, meekness is about the worst quality one can have. The meek may inherit the earth, and perhaps, as time goes on, the sea also. But meekness on board ship just now simply means starvation. You are overlooked, or, if you meekly ask for anything, your request is disregarded, if not actually resented, and so I go in finally for self-assertion on board ocean-steamers. The attendance is about as bad as it can be; only one stewardess, and the big fat Irishwoman as uncivil as she can be, although there are forty ladies on board. The stewards are all darkies, well-meaning but thoroughly incapable, and the waiting at table is execrable. The sailors are a scratch lot from San Francisco, and are as mean and scurvy a set as ever worked a ship. The beds smell of certain insects, which are supposed to be common in twopenny lodging-houses." Under such circumstances, and in such a mood, it is not surprising to find him

adding, "Weather wretched, and so are all the passengers." It is only fair to add that this referred to the condition of things which prevailed a quarter of a century ago, and the same remark applies to many of his descriptions of colonial affairs. The changes since then have been in many respects for the better.

When in Wellington, New Zealand, he met a disconsolate clergyman, who had just landed after a very stormy passage. At one part of the voyage the ship was in peril. "The clergyman had a bag containing twenty-three years of sermons in manuscript. So when the Captain ordered all hands on deck, he thought the time had come for the ship to sink and for the passengers to take to the boats. So he clutched his precious sermons, and telling his dear wife to follow him, rushed on deck. A flood of salt water met him, and washed his bag of tricks—I mean sermons—overboard, and they were lost. He said they were 'dearer to him than his life.' "

Richard Tangye was not quite sure that he heard the last word correctly, and wickedly said, though not, of course, to the distressed parson, that perhaps the final word was "wife."

Nothing pleased Tangye better than to come across, on land or sea, sharp intelligent little lads. He delighted to get into talk with them, and had the knack of gaining their confidence. Once, when he was starting across the Atlantic from Montreal, a policeman came on board with a bright little fellow, who attracted his attention. He went up to the

man and remarked that he supposed the boy was his son, and that he had brought him to see the ship get under way. "No, sir," was the reply, "he's no son of mine. He is a member of the Self-Help Society, and I am handing him over to the custody of the captain, who will take him to Liverpool, and will give him in charge of the police, to be sent on to his native place, Gloucester." It seemed a strange thing to ship back from Canada an enterprising little chap of that sort. Self-help was one of the watchwords of Tangye's life, and he expressed surprise. "Surely a boy of that sort was just the kind the Dominion needed." "Oh, you don't understand," said the policeman. "He is an experienced thief, and helps himself to other people's property. I would advice you to mind your pockets, for he is very clever." In conversation with the boy after we started, I found he had begged or stolen his way as far west as Winnipeg, and south to New York.

He had stories to tell of old thieves as well as young—some of them could not plead poverty as an excuse. A certain well-known man in business in Sydney was so mean that people said he would cheat his own grandmother. One day he was dining at a restaurant, and had about half a chicken set before him. He worked away at it, and when he was quite satisfied, there was still a good portion left, so he quietly wrapped it in his table-napkin, and, putting it in his hat, was walking off. But his movements had been watched by a waiter, who

called after him, "Look here, old man, we don't mind the chicken, but let's have the napkin back," and so he had to make tracks backwards, to his great mortification.

The adventures of a certain bishop, homeward bound from the States on an Atlantic liner, provided him with a capital story. The good man and his wife had retired to their cabin one very sultry night. The lady could not sleep because of the heat, and, though there was thunder in the air, she appealed to her husband to get up and open the porthole. He had scarcely regained his berth when a curious wooden ball, apparently attached to a string, popped into the cabin. The bishop was perplexed, but he tied up the ball, coiling the string to a nail in the wall, and once more tried to get sleep. But the ball, as the ship lurched, kept up a tattoo on the side of the cabin, and the disturbed lady grew querulous. At last the sleepy bishop put an end to the controversy by uncoiling the cord and placing the intrusive ball under his pillow. There was a heavy thunderstorm all night, but he slept soundly. At breakfast next morning he told the Captain, with a great deal of episcopal solemnity, about the adventure. The captain laughed boisterously. The bishop laughed too, thinking his story must be uncommonly amusing. Presently the Captain told him that he had appropriated the end of the lightning conductor. After that the worthy prelate looked under his pillow every night

before going to bed, and slept with a closed porthole.

He was greatly amused in his travels by the ready wit of Colonial waiters in the great hotels. The negro attendant in the cloak-room at a palatial establishment of this sort in San Francisco was uncommonly sharp. Several prominent men in Australia had come to Tasmania to inspect the irrigation colonies there, and amongst them was the Premier of Victoria. He was told during his visit that this particular negro could, without a moment's hesitation, hand out the right hat to every visitor. The Colonial statesman was a little incredulous at such a statement, and was determined to put the man to the test. So he went up to the counter and asked the man for his hat, at a time when there were at least sixty in the place. Instantly the man handed him a hat, which he turned over and over, as if in doubt, and regarded critically. At last he said, "Are you sure this is my hat?" "No Sah," was the instant response; "I don't know whose hat it is, but I do know you gave it me!" The Ethiopian scored, and the Australian was convinced.

He used to tell a good story about an old city missionary, who was employed at the Cornwall Works to look after the workmen when ill. He thought that a better man than this old evangelist, of his sort, never stepped into shoe-leather. He knew exactly how to tackle the people with whom he was brought in contact, and was a bit of a public

character, for in his unregenerate days he had been a pugilist. Then he came under the influence of the Friends, and was induced to attend the First Day Schools in Birmingham, which Alderman William White and other well-known Quakers conducted. When he first began to attend this Adult Sunday School, he was assailed by the jeers of his old companions. "Hullo, Joe, so you've turned Quaker, I hear!" exclaimed one of them. "No," said Joe, "I have not, but the Quakers have turned me." Another old comrade, meeting him one day, said, "Well, old man, I suppose if I were to smite you on one cheek, you would turn the other also." "Don't try it" said Joe with emphasis, "I've been studying the Bible lately, and in its pages I read, 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.'" Joseph had a notoriously heavy hand, and the fellows thought it wisdom to drop the subject.

Richard Tangye was not exactly consumed with admiration for the clergy. He was a Nonconformist of the most uncompromising order, and looked with disdain on anything in the nature of priestly authority. Let it be said, however, that he knew personally, at least in later life, a few clergymen, and was on the best of terms with them, but all of them were men of evangelical views, and most of them possessed the saving grace of humour. The hard, ascetic variety, who magnified their office without making it honourable, he had the wisdom to keep at a distance. He had many good

stories to tell of clerical life, and, as will be clear later, especially in Cornwall. Here is a story, the scene of which was not the Delectable Duchy. "A country vicar, being called away from his parish one Sunday, asked a neighbouring clergyman to preach for him. The parson duly ascended the pulpit and went through the service. On going into the vestry, he apologised to the churchwardens for his brief and incomplete sermon, explaining that he had prepared a proper one, but, just as he was leaving his house, found, to his dismay, that his little dog had destroyed half of it, and so, on that occasion, he had been compelled to do the best with the remainder." One of the churchwardens looked suddenly interested and exclaimed, "Sir, I wish you would give our vicar a pup."

Another story, which he was fond of telling, related to a certain parson, who had married a lady who brought him the substantial dowry of £10,000, with the prospect of more in due course. His congregation knew all about the money on account, and what was likely to follow in the way of unearned increment. The good man came back with his bride, and in church gave out a hymn, which he proceeded to read at length. He rolled out the first four verses in impressive tones, and was commencing the fifth, "Forever let my grateful heart," when he hesitated, looked confused, and said, "we will omit the last verse." Curiosity, under such circumstances, is pardonable. The people in the

pews instantly read the verse, and a broad smile spread over the congregation. It ran as follows :

“Forever let my grateful heart
His boundless grace adore,
Who gives ten thousand blessings now
And bids me hope for more.”

It was thoroughly applicable, but under the circumstances a little embarrassing.

Another story of the cloth related to a clergyman who was somewhat penurious. The worthy man was careful “to hold fast that which was good,” not forgetting the shekels. His church was very old-fashioned and needed alterations. His voice was rather thin, and so he began by placing a sounding-board over the pulpit. When this was duly fixed, he went into the church with his gardener to test the improvement. He told the old man to stand at the back of the building, whilst he went into the pulpit. He recited in energetic tones some portion of the church-service, and then called out, “How does that sound, James :” “Oh, first rate sir, first rate,” said the man. “Well,” said his master, evidently pleased, “now you go and say something, whilst I stand in your place.” The gardener, nothing loth, promptly mounted the pulpit, and bawled out at the top of his voice, “Haven’t had any wages for a fortnight. How does that sound, master ?”

There is often unexpected humour in political meetings,* and Richard Tangye never missed it.

On one occasion an exceedingly pompous speaker was delivering to his own satisfaction, an impressive harangue. Presently he came to a dramatic pause, and then broke forth in the words, "Gentlemen, I stand on the integrity of the Empire." From the back of the hall came the shrill, piercing voice of the village cobbler. "No, you don't. You stand on my shoe leather, and you have not paid for it," a remark which brought down the house.

Here, for a moment, we may leave Richard Tangye as a raconteur, though not without telling his experiences one winter's day at Charing Cross. He had been attracted by the proceedings of a group of odd people, who represented the Society of the White Rose. It was the anniversary of the so-called "martyrdom" of Charles I., and these enthusiasts were assembled round the equestrian statue of the king, who imperilled the liberties of England. They were engaged in placing wreaths and festoons around the base of the statue, with fervid words of homage attached, in witness to their devotion to the lost cause of the House of Stuart.

Richard Tangye, mild and benevolent-looking, approached the little gathering, and, as he was adorned with a beautiful miniature of Charles I., he was instantly hailed with enthusiasm as a comrade in the good cause. His miniature was examined with ecstatic admiration, but presently he turned it, and showed the assembly an equally fine portrait

on ivory of Oliver Cromwell, exclaiming at the same time "That's my man." Silence fell upon the little company, and Richard Tangye, feeling that he had made his protest and was not wanted any longer, went quietly away.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CROMWELL COLLECTION

Richard Tangye's admiration of Cromwell, and the reasons for it—Begins to collect memorials of the Commonwealth—Acquires the collection of Mr. J. de Kewer Williams—Bids for Benjamin Franklin's letters—Visitors to Glendorgal to view the collection—Its main features—Tangye's "Notes" on his Cromwellian treasures—The executioner of Charles I.—Tangye's "Two Protectors"—Cromwell and the "Twelve Apostles."

THE incident recorded in the closing words of the preceding chapter, slight as it is, brings into view what was in reality one of the ruling ideas of Richard Tangye's life. He had a fixed and invincible persuasion that the English nation owed more to Oliver Cromwell than to any other of its rulers. He saw in Cromwell, not merely the master-spirit of the Puritan Revolution, but the man who made civil and religious liberty possible at a period when kingcraft and priestcraft were working for their suppression. Cromwell, like every puritan worthy of the name, was an idealist, and yet a great master in the practical government of men. It was the religious fervour and moral courage of the rugged,

masterful, country gentleman of Huntingdon, who, at the age of forty-three, unsheathed his sword in defence of the inalienable rights of the English people, and put it back into its scabbard when the peril of the nation had vanished, that impressed him. Cromwell's ascendancy represented to him the triumph of personality—the personality of one who feared God, and therefore was dauntless in detraction and unmoved by opposition.

Cromwell was his hero, because he was a man of vision, who interpreted the lofty duties and splendid opportunities of the great place to which he came by right divine of sovereign gifts, as no ruler in England had ever done before. His imagination conjured up the man who gave prosperity and peace to all the nation, was a true friend of learning, and made England respected abroad. He shared the view of one of Oliver's contemporaries, who declared "larger soul, I think, hath seldom dwelt in an house of clay." He had no patience with those who sneer at the Roundheads and speak of the long prayers of the puritans, as if they were a cloak for hypocrisy, forgetful of the fact that England was never so strong, so clean, so enlightened, or so respected as in the days of the Commonwealth.

Cromwell, to his eyes, was a leader whom the national calamity had called to the front, and who was equal to the tremendous strain, because, all shining gifts apart, he was not so much a religious man in the ordinary acceptation of the term, as a man to whom religion was everything. He beheld

him standing brave and calm, as one of his own Ironsides, like an incarnate conscience before the moral licence of his age. This man, whose battle cry was "The Lord of Hosts," was no bigot, and only perverted malice could cast a slur upon his sincerity. In an age of religious tyranny Cromwell was tolerant. If he was a foe to the throne, it was because he would not countenance wrong in high places. If he was a foe to the church, it was because he deemed that she was disobedient to the heavenly vision. It was this that made his sword quick and powerful. He stood for truth and integrity in Church and State.

Probably it was the pages of Carlyle which first drew Richard Tangye into the ranks of Cromwell's whole-hearted, but, at the same time, not uncritical admirers. He saw the blemishes in his hero, but he knew there were spots on the sun, and he revered the uncrowned king in spite of his warts. He eagerly read every book about him on which he could lay his hand, and when his own means became ample he began to collect medals, miniatures, pamphlets, and historical documents of the Commonwealth, and everything that seemed likely to elucidate the character of this extraordinary man.

He began this task—if such a term is applicable to what was clearly a labour of love—as early as 1875, and as his enthusiasm became known nearly everything that was in the market, which in the least degree threw light on Cromwell's career, was offered to him. His own knowledge of the period and of the

man kept pace with his acquisitions, for many of his purchases led to historical research, and his eager mind refused to be satisfied until he had either traced every question to its solution, or found, after correspondence with experts, that the problem was insoluble.

In the spring of 1889 it was announced that a far more important Cromwell collection of manuscripts, portraits, medals, and the like, than that which Richard Tangye then possessed, was to be put up for sale in one of the London auction rooms. It represented the labour of a lifetime on the part of the Rev. J. de Kewer Williams, a well-known Congregational minister, who, for years, had cherished the ambition to write a new biography of the Protector, but left the task unattempted too long, and in the end abandoned it. After his retirement from active work, Mr. de Kewer Williams was not in a position to retain his historical treasures. His Cromwell collection, in short, was too valuable to remain in the keeping of a retired minister. His great anxiety was, of course, to sell it to the best advantage, and his wish was pronounced, that it might not, on the one hand, be dispersed in separate lots, or, on the other, be bought by America, like so many other national treasures, but remain in the land of Cromwell's birth.

A catalogue was duly drawn up, and the interest and variety of the Cromwell relics which Mr. Williams had gathered naturally attracted wide atten-

tion. There seemed likely to be a keen competition for them, and as they were to be put up in lots they would be scattered to the four winds of heaven—the latter being a contingency which filled the good man with misgivings. But on the morning of the sale it was announced that the whole of the Cromwell collection, about which connoisseurs were on the alert, had been sold by private treaty, and that the purchaser, whose name did not immediately transpire, had given a pledge that they should remain in this country. It was in that way that Richard Tangye came into possession of portraits and engravings of the Protector up to the number of two hundred, as well as rare printed books and tracts, bronzes, statuettes, coins, and medals. It was a public-spirited act, and the terms on which it was acquired were generous. If he had not come to the rescue at that juncture, the Cromwell Collection would have been scattered, and could never have been replaced. As it was, it fell into reverent and appreciative hands, and, to the last days of its new owner's life, grew steadily in extent and value by fresh purchases.

Richard Tangye was always alive to the importance of keeping unique historical memorials, of great men whose activities they represented, within reach of their fellow countrymen. Once, when he was in Washington, a stranger sought him out and asked him to purchase an extraordinary collection of autograph letters of Benjamin Franklin, fully

annotated. His visitor explained that he was a literary man, who had spent his life, and a considerable portion of his means, in gathering these letters together. He wanted a stiff sum—it ran into four figures—for the volumes in which they were arranged. Richard Tangye was greatly tempted to purchase them on the spot, but, on second thoughts, he said, “I should like to buy them, I am indebted to Benjamin Franklin’s Autobiography almost more than any other book. I read it as a lad, and it influenced my whole career. But it would be a shame to deprive the United States of such a collection. Why do you not offer it to the Government?” “I have offered it,” was the reply, “and they say that, much as they would like to add it to the national treasures, they cannot afford to give me my price.” “They say that, do they?” was the response. “Then go to them again, and tell them that if they do not buy them at once, there is a little man from Birmingham here just now, who will carry them off to England.” “Do you mean what you say?” said the man. “I always mean what I say,” was the characteristic reply. The Franklin letters were offered anew to the authorities with the assurance that it was now or never. They were at once accepted at the price named. Richard Tangye in recounting the incident said, “I really did not need them, and it was a big sum, so I saved my cheque, the man got his money, and the United States rose to the occasion.”

The Cromwell collection, apart from its value,

enriched his life with literary friendships. Historical experts of wide renown, and private students of the puritan epoch, alike recognised the importance of such aids to the interpretation of a great movement and of a wonderful man. The Cromwell collection was at first housed in a billiard-room at Gilbertstone, his home near Birmingham, and finally in a spacious and lofty apartment attached to Glendorgal. In his closing years he was a little embarrassed by the number of people, of all sorts and conditions, who sent requests to see the Cromwell relics. As long as his health and strength lasted, he took a keen pleasure not only in showing them but in explaining them, with a vivacity and knowledge which were unfailing. It did not much matter to him whether his visitors were distinguished scholars or a group of children; he took infinite pains to explain, in the light of the unique memorials which he possessed, all that was typical and impressive in Cromwell's career.

Genial and modest, he even suffered fools gladly. He used to tell, with a chuckle, racy stories of some of his visitors, especially of those who were slenderly endowed with knowledge of the subject. One instance may perhaps suffice. A fashionably-dressed lady, with her two daughters—summer visitors—to Newquay—came, in response to their own request, to see the Cromwell collection. Tripping briskly down the drive at Glendorgal, the lady turned to the girls and said, "My dears, when did Cromwell live? We must know something about it before

going in." They knew a good deal about it when they came out.

Apart from books, political tracts, and autograph letters, the Cromwell collection is surprisingly rich in commemorative medals of the Protector, and in coins minted during the Commonwealth. There are also many manuscripts, notably Cromwell's Survey of the Estates of King Charles the First, at Theobald's Park, Herts, autograph letters relating to the siege of Pontefract, of Cromwell, Fairfax, Lambert, Digby and others, a manuscript Book of Devotion, from the Library of Charles I., and autograph letters of the King and of Queen Henrietta Maria. Perhaps of still greater interest is the original manuscript of the Journal of the House of Lords, 1657-1659. This unique historical document has recently been published by order of the House of Lords. It is especially interesting inasmuch as that Assembly has no record of its proceedings during the Protectorate.

There are many autograph letters of Oliver, when Protector, in the collection, besides voluminous papers of Richard Cromwell, letters of William Penn, Benjamin Disbrowe, Thomas Ellwood, and a curious manuscript "Note-book of a Society Man written during the years 1640-1660." There is also an autograph letter from Queen Henrietta Maria to one of her well-wishers in France, and the House of Commons Journal in manuscript from July 4, 1653, to March 16, 1659, also, perhaps what is quite as interesting, the Journal of the

“Convention Parliament of 1660,” which brought about the Restoration.

There are several beautiful miniatures of Cromwell, John Hampden, John Lilburne, Prince Rupert, General Fleetwood, General Ireton, and other celebrities of the period, and portraits in oil of Charles I. and Oliver Cromwell, and many rare prints. Perhaps the most interesting personal relic is Oliver Cromwell's watch, made at Worcester, a button from Oliver's coat, purloined when he was sitting in judgment on Charles, a contemporary silver plaque, in high relief, of the Protector on horseback, and one of the three genuine death-masks of Cromwell, showing the wart over the right eye. Amongst other interesting mementoes is the baton of Sir Thomas Fairfax, General of the Parliamentary forces, an ebony staff with silver head, bearing an inscription, and dated 1645, and the skull of Richard Brandon, the supposed executioner of Charles I. But beyond all else, he valued Oliver Cromwell's Bible, with his own signature on the fly-leaf.

As years went on, and the number of visitors anxious to see the Cromwell collection increased, Richard Tangye admitted that he grew a little tired of playing the part, as he put it, of the genial showman. He therefore wrote a little volume of Notes on the Collection, which, though printed for private circulation in 1897, still remains unpublished. He used to put it into the hands of his visitors, and if they showed an intelligent interest in the subject,

they usually went away with a copy of the little book, which gives, in outline, the story of the Commonwealth. It consists of picturesque jottings suggested by the historical treasures, of which he was so proud, and no apology is necessary for a few typical extracts from its pages. They explain themselves, and therefore comment, in most cases, is superfluous.

“Look at this quaint little picture. It represents an ancient dominie in his gown, birch-rod in hand, ready to impress his admonitions on the youthful minds or backs of the two boys—also in gowns—who cling to his robe. Observe the high shelf on which the school-books are placed; little wonder that the lads should think that knowledge is high—they cannot attain to it.” The dominie is Dr. Beard of Huntingdon, and the two boys are Oliver Cromwell and his cousin John Hampden. The birch-rod evidently left no unpleasant memories in Oliver’s mind, for, in after years, when he came to supreme power, he promoted his old school-master to an important office.

Here is what he has to say about a portrait which greatly interested him. “This is a picture of Oliver’s mother, and, looking at it, one is not long left in doubt as to the origin of the Protector’s strong features. Evidently the old lady possessed strong opinions and knew how to carry them into effect. She came of a good family and is said to have been related to the Stuarts. Mistress Cromwell never felt happy in her lodgings at Whitehall—

where she died in 1654—and was always apprehensive of evil happening to her illustrious son. It is said that, whenever she heard the report of a gun or pistol, she would exclaim, 'My son is shot.' Against her expressed wish, she was buried in Westminster Abbey, but at the Restoration her body was thrown into a hole, outside the back door of the deanery, by the order of Charles II."

Close to this picture was a portrait of Cromwell's wife, Elizabeth Bourchier. "They were married in St. Giles' Church, Cripplegate, August 22, 1620—a church famous also for being the resting-place of John Milton." Curiously enough, all the portraits of Oliver Cromwell's wife, which are known to exist, represent her with a monkey, and no one has ever been able to explain the reason why it was introduced. Richard Tangye's explanation is plausible. "It is related of Oliver that, when he was an infant, an ape took him out of his cradle, and, to the terror of his mother, carried him on to the leads of the house, ultimately bringing him safely down. Perhaps the fondness of his wife for the animal has reference to this circumstance."

Cromwell's first act of rebellion, Tangye states, was committed when he was fined £10 for refusing to go up to Westminster to be knighted at the king's coronation. He gives a rapid sketch of the arbitrary proceedings of Strafford and Laud between the years 1629 and 1640, and of the levying of ship-money and other illegal taxes provocative of rebellion. The Short Parliament assembled in

the latter year, but it only survived twenty-three days, because it assailed the policy of the King instead of voting supplies. "Charles wanted money, not advice," was the dry comment. On November 3, 1640, Cromwell took his seat in the Long Parliament, which remained in power until 1653. On three occasions he came prominently to the front in this Parliament. He moved the second reading of the Annual Parliament Bill, was one of those who drew up the drastic measure, called the "Root and Branch" Bill, and, in conjunction with Sir Harry Vane, prepared the measure for the abolition of Episcopacy. In January 1642, the King made his attempt to seize the Five Members, and in another week had quitted Whitehall, never to return till he was brought back to die. There was a complete deadlock, as matters had come to a crisis. The appeal to the sword could no longer be delayed.

The nation was instantly divided into two hostile camps. "The Civil War began in 1642; on August 22 of that year Charles unfurled his standard at Nottingham. He had an army of 10,000 men, of all sorts and conditions—retainers of country gentlemen, and idlers and dissolute fellows from the towns. But it was led by trained soldiers, men who had spent their lives in the Dutch and German Wars." Cromwell went into the fight at Edgehill on Sunday, October 23, 1642, with only the rank of a captain of horse. "At Alcester, twenty miles away, Richard Baxter was

preaching that day from the text, 'The kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence,' little knowing what was done at Edgehill, while his audience distinctly heard the booming of the cannon during the whole of his discourse."

There is no need to describe either the course of the struggle, or the manner in which Oliver Cromwell, by sheer force of ability, came to the front, though in this little book much that is dramatic in the conflict is thrown into relief. The brunt of the fighting, so far as the army of the Parliament was concerned, fell on the Ironsides—picked men from the eastern counties, on whom Cromwell could rely. "I raised," said Oliver, "such men as had the fear of God before them and made some conscience of what they did," and from that day forward they were never beaten. The final stages of the struggle are next described, to that last sad scene of all on Tuesday, January 30, 1649, when Charles I. was brought to the block outside the palace of Whitehall.

The question is discussed—it has never been absolutely settled—as to the identity of the executioner of the king. The balance of evidence, as these pages show, is that Richard Brandon was the headsman. If so, he outlived Charles I. only by a few months, for he died in June 1649, and was buried in the churchyard of St. Mary's, White-chapel, amidst the execrations of a concourse of people. There is a rare tract in the British Museum entitled "A confession of Richard Brandon, the

hangman, on his death-bed, concerning the beheading of his late Majesty," which shows that he claimed to have done the deed. Here a final extract from Richard Tangye's "Notes" may be cited. "In 1880, the old church in Whitechapel was pulled down, and, in digging the foundations of the new one, Brandon's grave was discovered, and the architect took his skull and gave it to Mr. C. M. Oliver, who gave it to Colonel Keene, of Bath. That skull is now in my collection, and there seems to be little doubt that Brandon was the king's executioner."

The Cromwell collection did not exhaust Richard Tangye's attempts to elucidate the strange dramatic story of the Commonwealth. He published, in 1899, a scholarly book, entitled "The Two Protectors—Oliver and Richard Cromwell," a volume which, though not dispassionate, is marked by considerable research, as well as by independence of judgment. It drew him into correspondence with other students of the Commonwealth, notably Mr. Frederic Harrison, who thus writes of Richard Tangye: "The enthusiasm he felt for the great memory of Cromwell made us kindred spirits. All that I ever knew or heard of him led me to honour him as one of our noblest captains of industry, and I followed with sympathy all that he did or said." Needless to say, Richard Tangye gathered many stories about his hero. Here is one of them which came to him too late to be included in "The Two Protectors." Oliver Cromwell, on one of his

journeys, entered a country church, and was shown its treasures, and, chief among them, a row of quaint silver statuettes. "These are the twelve Apostles," the great upholder of the liberties of England was told. "The twelve Apostles," exclaimed Oliver, "then melt them down and send them forth to preach the Gospel!" Some people might say, "What an iconoclast," but Richard Tangye's comment was otherwise minded.

CHAPTER XV

AMONGST HIS OWN PEOPLE

Cornish traits of character—Glendorgal—Generous hospitality and kindness—Stories of Cornish life—"Vain sports"—Quaker Meeting-Houses—"Tall talkers"—"Divine and Moral songs"—A question of corns—Easy way of cancelling debts—"We've usually sot!"—A Wesleyan minister's send-off—"You're gooen down 'ill fast"—An extraordinary text—Result of "eddication"—Definition of a vineyard—A sick man and a grave-digger—"In the flesh still."

RICHARD TANGYE loved the West Country, in which he was born, with the undivided heart of a true Cornishman. He revelled in its glorious scenery, and was never so happy as when wandering along its rocky, wave-swept, romantic shores in the company of a friend, and with his dogs at his heels. He was a keen student of its annals. He knew, as only a native can know, its quaint customs, lingering superstitions, and the characteristics of simple, stalwart sons of the soil, who, unlike himself, had scarcely wandered out of their own parish. The Cornish people do not wear their hearts upon their sleeves; they are shy, somewhat clannish, and not at all inclined to give their confidences freely to the

strangers who now flock, in ever-increasing numbers, to what has been called not inaptly the English Riviera. Once break, however, through the crust of honest Cornish reserve, and win the goodwill of these people, the road to their hearts is easy. They are proud of their beautiful county, with its golden sand and its wide expanse of blue sea, its picturesque traditions and its simple life. Richard Tangye needed no introduction to them when first he began to spend his summer holidays in the beautiful house, which he first rented and afterwards bought, called Glendorgal—built on a rocky promontory, encircled on three sides by the Atlantic, and within a mile of what has now become the fashionable watering-place of Newquay.

All his life he was fond of dogs, and was never happy without their company. He had many such pets, and they were privileged inmates of his home. He wrote a small book about one of them, entitled "Little Gip," which had a wide circulation, and many of his friends can remember the peculiar affection with which he regarded the two little foreign dogs, Yamba and Bruin, which followed him in his last days everywhere. They repaid his devotion, and were always restless when he was out of sight. He would often break off in a conversation to address a few words to them, and many were the stories he had to tell of their fidelity and sagacity. In his last illness Yamba and Bruin were constantly with him. It seemed as if they could not live without him, and both of these beautiful creatures

showed the utmost dejection when he passed away, and survived him only a few weeks.

The Cornish people knew that he was one of themselves, a lad who had left his native village many years before, not merely to seek his fortune, but to make it, in far-off Birmingham. When he came back, with his wife and children, he received a downright Cornish welcome. They appreciated the presence of a rich and prosperous man, who was one of themselves, and thought it a mark of quality that, when he might have gone to other resorts at home or abroad, he preferred to rest and be thankful amongst the people who knew his humble origin. He used to say that, when he first went to Newquay, a dozen people on its quaint, narrow streets in summer stirred the local curiosity, and represented a "crowd" of strangers. Glendorgal, in the first instance, was rented by him year after year—a house so situated that, from its windows, twenty miles of the rocky coast could be seen, with the Atlantic breakers hurling their spray high into the air, and he grew more and more enchanted with the quietude and beauty of the place. No man could have wished for a more charming spot in which to renew his strength, for, apart from its bracing air, as he put it, the next parish was in America, far across the boundless expanse of heaving water, which almost encircled his wide garden, high on the cliff, over which ran picturesque walks, from which it was possible to look down into the depths of the ocean.

Glendorgal was built many years ago, and was long in the occupation of Mr. Pendarves Vivian, who greatly improved the house, a low, picturesque, roomy building, of two stories, sheltered at the back by rising ground. The house was sold in 1882 to Richard Tangye, and, together with an island, a quarter of a mile away across the Porth, with its swift tidal waters, still remains in the possession of his family. The new owner built a bridge, at a high altitude, to connect the mainland with this island, which, with characteristic generosity, he threw open to the public, thus ending a long dispute about the rights of way. This boon to visitors is more and more appreciated year by year, for from the grassy slopes of the island one of the finest views of the Cornish coast is obtained.

At Glendorgal he spent, as he himself said, "thirty glorious summers," and not one of them in selfish seclusion. He brought down to his home, to enjoy a whiff of the sea in the holiday months of the year, all sorts and conditions of people, chiefly tired men and women of narrow means, not always the sort of company he would have chosen, but whom he treated as honoured guests. Businessmen from Birmingham met at his hospitable table, missionaries on furlough from the East, and literary acquaintances foregathered, in the garden of dreams by the sea, with anxious workers in the world of philanthropy—in the ordered freedom of a place, the master and mistress of which never tired of setting the most shy and self-conscious of their

visitors completely at their ease. The pleasure which Richard Tangye and his household gave in such directions is not a matter which can be reckoned, but it lives in the grateful memories of every one who entered that sunny house, with its books and pictures, and, above all, its simple, unfettered hospitality.

The charm of Glendorgal consisted largely—apart from the racy and genial talk of its master—in the fact that the guests were allowed to do exactly as they pleased. They might browse amongst its books, or loiter all day in its arbours, or go a-fishing, or wander over the cliffs or across the sands, till nightfall brought them back to the evening meal. If any one seemed lonely, the master of the house would propose a walk, and beguile the way, from one romantic coign of vantage to another, with his racy talk. He was continually “helping,” as Charles Kingsley put it, “lame dogs over stiles,” and he encountered many of them not only under his own roof at Glendorgal, but wherever he went on his way through the world. People met him with no thought of self-revelation, in the intimate sense, and presently some anxious secret, over which they had long brooded, would leap to light, without any probing, since here was a man who took the burdens of others upon himself, and carried them all through the after-days, with a loyalty and consideration, rare in this selfish world. Some men give advice with an oracular air, as if their verdict on the matter in hand was the last word on

the subject, and therefore beyond all controversy. He gave it modestly, almost with an air of apology, and never unless it was asked, except in the case of young people, who clearly needed a word of admonition.

His stories of Cornish life, reminiscent of his own boyhood, and others gathered in later life in chance encounters with humble folk around Glendorgal, are well-nigh exhaustless. It is only possible to make a selection from them, and in doing so it may perhaps be best to give the preference, at the outset at least, to those which were linked with his memories of early days.

Strange questions were sometimes asked in those days at Quakers' meetings in Cornwall. Once, the monthly advices—counsels of perfection—were being read out, and stress was laid on that occasion on the avoidance of vain sports. Thereupon a newly-joined member asked what "vain sports" were. Before any of the grave Friends could reply, for they were not very nimble of speech, he added, "Was kissing my-dens (maidens) in the hye (hay) a vain sport?" He was not regarded as a very satisfactory recruit to the society, since he proceeded to inform the gathering that personally he saw no objection to it.

It is only during recent years that Quaker Meeting Houses have been made comfortable. Richard Tangye could remember them when his love of truth demanded an altogether different description. In his early days they had stone floors, narrow and

uncomfortable seats, with straight backs, and in winter the cold was disquieting, for fires or stoves were luxuries which were discountenanced. When it was proposed to place a stove in the primitive Meeting-House which he attended in his school-days, a venerable Friend made a solemn protest. "I remember," said he, "that, in the time of the persecution, Friends were only too glad to meet under a bramble-bush, if they could meet in peace and security." He was overruled, however, to the great delight, at all events, of boys, who were not perhaps so fervent in spirit.

Richard Tangye's father recoiled instinctively from all exaggeration in speech. "There was a man in our neighbourhood who was great in spinning yarns about his own powers in difficult situations. When he had made some unusually incredible statement, my father would ask him, with a dry sort of humour, 'Who said so?' When the boaster replied, 'I did,' my father would say, 'Oh, then it *must* be true!' Often since then I have stopped a 'tall-talker' in mid-career by applying the same test."

In his native village were many quaint old people with an odd faculty for racy speech. One of them was, what the neighbours used to describe as, "not quite all there." He was a devout Methodist, and regularly attended the services at chapel. One day he solemnly reproved a fellow worshipper, whom he had noticed was rather fitful in his attention when the collection plate was handed round.

“ You know you can’t be a disciple unless you pay a penny a week—the Bible says so.” On another occasion this worthy was offered a copy of Watts’ “ Divine and Moral Songs.” He looked shocked, and brusquely declined the volume, exclaiming, “ I don’t want noane of your immoral songs ; taake them away, will ’ee ? ”

Some of the old women in the village were great croakers about their health. The parish doctor had gone his round from door to door, and found them all more or less grumbling about their ailments. But when he came to the last house, the old dame was briskly engaged at her wash-tub. “ Well, Mrs. Chegwidden, I am glad to find that you are not complaining, like the rest.” “ Well, doctor,” was the response, “ I am glad to say my general health is very good—thank the Lord for it—but I must say, He do take it out of my corns, for my feet are covered with them.”

Here is another snatch of personal reminiscence. “ My father kept a general shop, and, being a good-natured man, was much resorted to by a class of customers who preferred buying on credit to paying in cash. Such sales were entered in a day-book, and, when paid for, were marked with a vertical stroke of the pen. I once caused some confusion by marking off quite a number of these entries—an entirely new way of paying old debts, but, fortunately, the vigour of my juvenile strokes caused them to be recognised as the work of a novice, and I do

not think many debtors were relieved by my attempt at bookkeeping.

“When quite a child my afternoons were often employed in looking up long-winded customers, occasionally getting a trifle on account, but more often coming empty away. One woman objected to pay, saying, ‘Ow do I know you are Joseph Tangye’s boy? Any one may come demanding people’s money like that.’ This worthy dame, however, gave me a shilling, and, playing with it when crossing a field, I lost it in the grass; but, knowing it was useless returning without the money, I hunted about for some hours until I found the coin.”

The Cornish folk of those days were uncommonly sturdy and independent—qualities which did not diminish as life advanced. One old couple came to church to be married, which was by no means a new experience to either of them. It was the fifth occasion on which the man had led his bride to the altar. When they had advanced up the church, instead of taking their stand before the Communion Table, they sat down. The parson called them to order, and requested them to stand. This was not at all to the old man’s liking, so he testily remarked, “We’ve usually sot!” but the appeal to experience was vain.

The unexpected often happens in Cornish speech. A Wesleyan minister in the Duchy was taking leave of an old lady in his congregation, at the end of his three years’ ministerial services. “Well, good-bye,

Mrs. —.” “Good-bye, sir,” said the old lady with alacrity, “the Lord never takes a good thing away without sending a better in its place.” The man who usually “sot” at his weddings ought to have known a certain good woman in the county. She had just lost her husband and sent a sympathising friend to ask the vicar to conduct the funeral. All arrangements were duly made, when the man turned on the doorstep, “I hope, sir, you won’t forget the day, for Mrs. — is very particular. She always keeps her husbands a week.”

Before the railway came to Newquay old Mrs. Hoyte used to run a curious, ancient van for passengers. When she was over ninety years of age, but still hale and hearty, Richard Tangye met her one day on the streets of Newquay. “Well, how are you, Mrs. Hoyte? Going about like a young woman still, I see!” “Ah, Mr. Tangye, I am gettin’ an ould womman—I am, fine an fast sure ’nuff.” “Oh nonsense, Mrs. Hoyte, you will outlive a lot of us yet.” She brightened up, and gave him an answer which he did not soon forget. It may be recorded with his own comment. “‘Well, Mr. Tangye, *you’re* gooien’ down ’ill fast, you are;’ said she, and then, pointing her finger at him like an old witch, added with emphasis, ‘You *are*, you *are*!’ And I have been feeling badly ever since.” But he lived to laugh over the incident for many a long day.

Servant girls in Cornwall, as elsewhere, do not always go to church when they are sent out for that

purpose. The maid in a very strict household was thought by her mistress to be guilty of loitering in the lane, but, in this instance at least, the suspicion was groundless. In order to know if she had really attended the service, she was asked for the text of the sermon. She replied that she had arrived late and had sat near the door, and was not quite sure of the words, but thought the parson gave out as the subject of his discourse, "Unless you pay your rent you will all come upon the parish!" This was such an extraordinary assertion, as to call for subsequent inquiry. The worthy divine had, in reality, preached from the words, "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish."

Cornish local preachers use great plainness of speech. Sometimes they give those from whom they differ, what can only be described as a piece of their mind. On one occasion a local brother was dealing in the pulpit with the alleged necessity for an "educated priesthood," upon which the clergy were always insisting. He thought that it was possible to get on very well without book-learning, and presently proceeded to draw an elaborate contrast between the apostles Peter and Paul. "Was St. Peter an eddicated man?" he asked. "No," he exclaimed, "he was a poor fisherman. But what happened when he preached? why thousands were converted. Then there was St. Paul. Now he *was* 'eddicated,' for we are told he sat at the feet of the great Gamaliel. But what happened when he preached? why a young man in

the gallery went to sleep, tumbled down, and broke his neck ! ”

Two Cornishmen happened to meet on Sunday afternoon. They looked at each other straight. Presently one of them said to the other, “ Goin’ to chapel to-night, Jan ? ” One question provokes another. “ Who’s goin’ to prache ? ” He was told that “ Maister Jenkins ” was to take the service. “ Oh, ’ee ez, ezza ? then I sha’ant go, fer Maister Jenkins ez alwez prachin’ about the Prodigal Son and the Vineyard. As fur as the Prodigal Son goes, I am quite tired of the blaggard. But wot’s a vineyard, Bill ? ” His friend thought awhile ; it was a question more easily asked than answered. Then his face brightened—“ Well, do ee know Bodmin Bekken, Jan ? ” “ Iss.” “ Well, you just fancy Bodmin Bekken planted all awver wi bean-sticks, and you’ll know waht a vineyard ez.”

It sometimes happens that the Cornish people carry plainness of speech too far. It may even lead them, with the best intentions in the world, to play, quite unconsciously, the part of the men who tried to comfort the patriarch Job. A poor old man was lying very ill in his cottage, and there was no one to sit up with him through the dark, wakeful hours of the night. The village doctor at last came to his rescue. He found a man who was willing to watch by the sufferer’s bedside, and it chanced that he was the grave-digger of the parish. He was told to keep the patient as quiet as possible and to resist all overtures to conversation, as sleep

was imperative. But the doctor had scarcely closed the door, before the sexton began to talk, and he kept on talking until the night was far spent. The topic on which he seized was about the people of all kinds he had buried, and he gave details, so that the sick man might be in full possession of the exact position of their graves. Then waxing confidential, and wishful at the same time to cheer up the drooping spirits of the white-faced, restless listener, he ended up by saying, "You know that one pa-art of our churchyard is dry and the other is wet. Now, I shall dig your grave in the dry pa-art—on account of your rheumatics." When the doctor called next day, he found his patient in a high fever. He made inquiries and was told that tale of a winter's night, and the sexton was sent to the right-about.

The Cornish folk often make sharp retorts. An old bed-ridden woman, with no one in the house except her daughter at the best of times, was often left on dark nights alone. Her daughter never missed an opportunity of going to chapel, and this, of course, meant a period of depressing solitude to the helpless sufferer. A friend of the devout young woman returned with her to the cottage one night, and grasped the situation. "You don't mean to say you left your poor old mother all alone?" "No," replied the girl, "I didn't. She wasn't alone. The Lord was with her." This sounded conclusive, and an uneasy silence fell on the little company. It was broken by a shrill voice

from the bed. "That's all very true, Mary—the Lord was with me, but I am in the flesh still, and I like some of my own kind about me all the same!"

It would be easy to add many other stories, not less racy, of the soil; the difficulty, in reality, is to know where to stop. Richard Tangye's talk sparkled with the quaint sayings of the simple but shrewd folk of, what he called, his "dear native county." No one ever rambled about the romantic grounds of Glendorgal in his company without realising that here was a man who, though he knew the freaks and foibles of his own people, loved them surpassingly well.

Richard Tangye's life was not all spent in the sunshine of success. He shared, to an extent which few suspected, the common lot of disappointment and sorrow. But even in the days of weakness and pain, he refused to surrender either his brave and cheerful outlook, or his love of merriment. He had "thatched his house in fine weather," and in the storms of life he could afford to be glad.

CHAPTER XVI

THE OPEN HAND

The penalty of kindliness—Varieties of beggars—Fruitless appeals for aid—An unredeemed promise—Unreal poverty—Curious petitions—Requests that went home—"An extraordinarily wonderful discovery"—"Victoria Crown Minstrels"—Pleas of Cornishmen—Beggars of all nationalities—A punster—Gaelic not wanted—Short and to the point—A widower's request—Distressed authors—Helping "lame dogs"—An audacious appeal—Tangye's discrimination in bestowing charity—Money as a trust—Compounding with Pensioners.

MANY men, possessed of more wealth than Richard Tangye ever handled, go through life without being besieged for assistance, to the extent that he was, by impecunious strangers. The reason is not far to seek. If a wealthy man is known to be close-fisted, unsympathetic, and brusque, he need not have a reputation for unassailable selfishness to keep such applicants at arm's length. People do not waste their breath in fruitless appeals, when it is common knowledge that generosity is the strange work of a man. But Richard Tangye had to pay the penalty of his kindliness. He had set so many deserving

people on their feet, doing it in such a delicate as well as practical way, that the undeserving pelted him with extraordinary epistles, containing all sorts of plausible stories about their real or imaginary woes.

His own experience had taught him that beggars are of various kinds. He was accustomed to say that, just as, in the old days, the turnpikes were infested by footpads and mounted highwaymen, so now under other conditions there were beggars on foot, and beggars on horseback. Charles Lamb declared that the beggar was the only man in the universe who did not need to study appearances, but the modern mendicant, it must be added, is often much too wily not to have studied the philosophy of clothes to some purpose. On one occasion a stranger sent in his card to Richard Tangye, who found himself confronted by a well-dressed, comfortable-looking man, who at once, in affable terms, tried to wheedle him out of a couple of sovereigns to take him to London. He did not like the look of the plausible stranger, and declined to be accommodating, and, on showing him out, found he had a cab in waiting, the charge for which, for the stand was a good many miles away, would have nearly paid his fare from Birmingham to London. This sort of applicant did not stand alone. Another man rode up to his house on a tricycle, and calmly requested him to provide him with the wherewithal for the purchase of a horse, as cycling was too hard work, and the

doctor strongly advised him to try equestrian exercise.

On another occasion a young man came to him with words of gratitude on his lips. He said he wanted to thank him for having rendered some pecuniary assistance to his brother when on a voyage to Australia, and assured him that he himself meant to repay the loan. But before he took up his hat, without of course making good his promise, he hinted that a little loan to himself would be a great favour. Richard Tangye was deceived by the apparent candour of the young fellow, and advanced the money, receiving in return a formal acknowledgment of indebtedness, which he kept, unredeemed, for twenty years as a curiosity and as a warning.

His stories of this kind were endless. It is possible to cite only a few typical examples. Here is a letter received by him, written by a sentimental young man of easy scruples. "Poverty is a relative term and depends upon the constitution of men's minds. It is true that I have always had enough to eat, and have never borrowed money, or been in debt, but what of that? I feel that within me that makes me miserable until I have seen Niagara, or St. Peter's at Rome. I understand music thoroughly,—theory and practice, but have never seen an opera. I want to attend the concerts in the Birmingham Town Hall, and for years have dreamed of the Festival. I long to hear the great organ at St. Paul's and to attend a concert at the

Albert Hall. But these are all forbidden pleasures, and this, Sir, to a man like me, constitutes poverty." It is to be hoped by this time he has realised his ambitions without the help of Richard Tangye, who knew too much about real poverty to respond to such an appeal.

Some people are altogether too obliging. An unknown correspondent wrote to him in the following terms :—" I venture to suggest that you should appoint me your almoner. I know that you are a very busy man, but I have abundance of time on my hands and have been accustomed to dispense the charity of others. Hoping to hear from you." That hope was not fulfilled.

People asked him for all sorts of things. One confiding young woman wished him to pay her dentist's bill, and a man desired him to provide him with a wooden leg, whilst another, more modest, only wanted a new hat. A person, who described himself as a workman, wrote an appeal for a pair of boots, but the letter was so saturated with tobacco that Richard Tangye, who did not smoke, told him that if he could afford to fill his pipe he ought to be able to buy shoe-leather. An old gentleman required a loan of £25, and was candid enough to say that he should never be able to repay it, but, he added, the furniture in my bedroom is worth more than that sum, and my own property, and I will give a memorandum to that effect, so that when I am dead you can claim it." No doubt he received a gift without any lien on his household goods, for

that was the kind of appeal which Richard Tangye could scarcely resist.

People persisted in regarding Richard Tangye as an inventive genius, though he always disclaimed it, whatever might be the merits of his elder brothers in that direction. The result was that he was besieged by inventors who wished him to develop their "ideas." Here is an instance of letters of this kind, the name of which was legion :

"Sir, Having made an extraordinarily wonderful discovery, and having succeeded in perfecting an apparatus I have invented for the discovering of lost vessels, and, observing by the papers that you are interested in the promotion of Arts and Sciences has induced me to hope that you will pardon the liberty I take as a working man in addressing these few lines to you, in the hope that you will find the means to enable me to bring my invention out. I will now describe what my invention will accomplish ; by its application, even when all souls may perish in the wreck, authentic information can be obtained of all future wrecks and the certain fate ascertained, also the cause and date of the disaster, and the place where the ill-fated vessel has gone down, so that all valuable articles, moneys, &c., may now be recovered, as also the vessel if found not to be too much damaged."

This unappreciated genius went on to explain that the Admiralty, before whom he had placed his proposals, was unsympathetic, and ended by adding, "I am informed by a friend of mine, that when

successfully bought it would realise, by royalty alone, at least £100,000 a year." Needless to say that invention still awaits the help of some sanguine capitalist.

When the Queen's Diamond Jubilee was approaching, a precocious youth in the Midlands wrote to him a letter which began with the statement that he felt he should like to "do some good in commemoration of that auspicious event." He proceeded to appeal to Richard Tangye, as a "kind-hearted Englishman," to assist him in starting a band of juvenile minstrels, which he proposed to call, in honour of Her Majesty, the "Victoria Crown Minstrels." He said, young as he was,—his age was sixteen,—he had had experience in this direction, and ended his epistle with the words, "Let me inform you, this is not a letter of a bogus kind. It is of a genuine character, and, if replied to, will turn out to be of very good account." There is something extremely diverting in the idea of a Quaker philanthropist helping to run a troupe of young minstrels for the honour of the Crown.

Not a few of these unsolicited communications were from people who professed to be distressed Cornishmen, and thought that fact entitled them to special consideration. A man of this sort, writing from a common lodging-house in London, declared that he was one of the unfortunate class who never had a chance of getting on, and stoutly maintained, "I am unable to obtain work simply because I have to wear glasses, being near-sighted,"

a plea which he probably imagined might appeal to a man whose eyesight was defective.

Sometimes these letters were pitiful enough, for they evidently came from well-educated men, who began by admitting that they had brought their troubles upon themselves. Perhaps a typical instance of this correspondence is enough. A man in Manchester, who could give no address except the General Post Office, stated that he was recently a tutor in the West of England, but was, at the time of writing, a tramp, with no home, except the casual-ward of the workhouse. He wanted a small sum to get a pedlar's licence and a modest stock in trade.

Appeals for help of this sort came from all parts of the world,—Germany, Italy and Australia, for instance,—and, occasionally, even from professional men of academical distinctions, as well as from “professional” beggars of the ordinary type. Of course, there were also embarrassing letters from well-intentioned, respectable people, who knew of some case of distress in their own locality, which they were exceedingly anxious to relieve, without putting their hands into their own pockets, and therefore solemnly exhorted Richard Tangye to rise at once to the occasion. Sometimes they began with the convenient commonplace about rich men not knowing the best direction in which they might do good, and closed by laying the burden on “your conscience.” But, to such a man, this was the kind of argument which, apart from its good taste, missed its mark.

Appeals with a pun in them were rare. One writer, however, wanted some tangible proof of Richard Tangye's generosity, and, to make sure that his pleasantry was understood, underscored the word "*tangible*." Not a few evidently thought that, like the woman in the parable, they would be heard for their much speaking, and returned again and again to the charge, passing, in the process, from appeals for immediate assistance to lofty heights of moral indignation at what they regarded as callous neglect of their claims. Surely the letter-box of even a kind-hearted man of wealth was seldom filled with more curious and far-fetched requests for practical assistance.

Odd reasons were often given by those who appealed to his purse. On one occasion a gentleman, with a very Irish name, sought assistance in order that he might be able to "form an evening class for the teaching of Gaelic in Birmingham," which Richard Tangye, not unnaturally, regarded as a work of supererogation. Another man, who described himself as a monumental sculptor, in a considerable way of business, was kind enough to enclose a pitiful letter from a lady, a poor relation of his own, whom he called a thoughtless, helpless creature. He evidently was tired of keeping her himself, and therefore ended up his letter with this pointed question :—"I ask you, in her name, if her case comes within your kind benevolence."

Professional beggars, as a rule, understand—within limits—the art of letter-writing. The

majority of them know how to turn a compliment, as well as to mask their guns. There are, of course, exceptions to such a rule—abrupt communications, with vague and vast demands, dashed off without any straight-laced adherence to the rules of spelling. Here is an instance of such a communication :—
“Sir, having a whife, who I may say can neither walk or talk, may I beg of you to help me keep her and myself from the workhouse.”

Many people, good, bad, and indifferent, appealed to Richard Tangye to find them a situation. Some of them said nothing whatever about their qualifications, but were quite explicit in regard to the salary which they expected. “A widower with seven children” was anxious to marry again. He had set his affections on the sister of his late wife ; but she was a prudent woman, and declined to entertain such a proposal, unless he could obtain a situation worth £200 a year. He confided his difficulties, and calmly asked for “such a berth.”

Of course the distressed author expected Richard Tangye, as a brother of the pen, to come to his aid. One impecunious member of the writing class, who had written a manuscript about national finance and the problems of taxation, bombarded him with letters, asking financial help towards the cost of its production, and ultimately sending the manuscript itself for his perusal. The correspondence ended with the following reply :—“Sir, I have not time to read the entire book which you have sent me, but have adopted your suggestion by looking at two

or three of the important items. On page 35 you style the 'Popular Party' the 'party of plunder.' I belong to the 'Popular Party.' On page 163 you say, 'graduated taxation is iniquity and robbery.' I entirely believe in the principle of graduated taxation, although a 'capitalist.' As to your remarks on County and Parish Councils, your statement of 'facts' I believe to be entirely erroneous, and your opinion consequently fallacious. I regret I am unable to express a favourable opinion of your book, and must therefore be excused from contributing to the cost of its production."

A schoolmaster of musical tastes wanted £10 to enable him to publish some of his compositions, which he was sanguine enough to believe would quickly make their own welcome; but this did not content him, for he went on to say, "I am a Liberal, but have been staggered because of Mr. Gladstone's sympathy with Bradlaugh, who is a very clever man, and would be a star in Parliament if he were converted. Now, a gentleman in your position could easily have a day set apart in two or three places of worship for special and earnest prayer for Bradlaugh's conversion, which prayer may be effectual. Hoping to receive a favourable reply."

Young men wrote to him for money in order to make a start in life, and old men wrote to him because they had made a bad start, and were on the rocks at the end. Some men dipped their flags to him in mid career, because they themselves were dipped in "temporary em-

barrassments," and needed a helping hand. As time went on and his experience widened, he developed, to an extraordinary extent, the faculty of discrimination, but to the close of his life he always leaned to mercy rather than to judgment, preferring to be deceived rather than to miss the chance of helping a lame dog over a stile.

There was a touch of audacity in some letters which he received. The authorities of a certain bran-new University in one of the Western States of America wanted him to come to the help of that University to a considerable amount. It is enough to quote the words which he wrote on the envelope, containing this child-like and bland proposal. "Will I lend them £40,000 on security of land which won't sell? Reply, 'No, thank you.'"

"A boarding-house keeper in a fashionable watering place, an entire stranger to me, wanted me to buy her house to enable her to marry, as she was alone in the world; and she suggested that I might like to set some deserving person up in business.

"The humours of beggars are as various as they are curious, and I have had great experience of them. One class prefer their request, and wind up with 'thanking you in anticipation;' these go straight into the waste-paper basket.

"A year or two ago a London Journalist wrote me asking for a contribution on behalf of a professional brother in temporary trouble. I complied, and a few months later the same person wrote on his own behalf.

"I have now received another request from him beginning with 'Necessity has no law,' and ending with 'Hoping, for your own sake, you have not forgotten the *pleasure* of giving.'

"Some years ago the Secretary of a Benevolent Institution came to me at my office asking for a considerable sum for it. He told me that while asleep the night before, in a vision or a dream, he was distinctly told to come to me and he would receive the required sum. I replied that as soon as I had seen a similar vision and had been distinctly told what I was to do, I would at once communicate with him."

The clergy of all denominations, but more especially those of the Free Churches, proved importunate. He would have beggared himself if he had responded, in the way which such good people evidently expected, to the exceptional circumstances which were constantly pleaded. It was not, of course, one of the cloth who asked him to clear the debt of a certain chapel, since the trustees had got into arrears, because "the sermons do not come up to the requirements."

He was known to be a bookish man and therefore was supposed to take a keen interest in the promotion of village Reading Rooms. He was always careful, however, in replying to applications of this sort, for he did not want to do anything to perpetuate a privileged order. The following words, from one of his letters on the subject, show his method in dealing with such applications: "You

do not say if the building you propose to erect is on freehold ground. I should like also to know in whom the property would be invested, and who would have the control over it. Tell me also if it would be a public room, or only for one denomination. I could not undertake to contribute to any building which was not a public one."

Probably not a few of his small cheques and postal orders found their way into unworthy hands, for he was impulsive as well as warm-hearted, and, as the lines had fallen to him in pleasant places, his imagination was easily led captive by the sharp contrast suggested by highly-coloured descriptions of forlorn and straitened lots.

This, however, is only one side of the matter. He was a shrewd, practical man of affairs, of wide and exceptional experience, and in consequence, quick, as a rule, in the interpretation of character. If the writer struck a false note, was guilty of palpable exaggeration, indulged in cant, or grew too eloquent in the recital of his misfortunes, he tossed the letter aside. On the other hand, he sometimes wrote back a pithy, kindly note, containing a few straightforward questions, and in that way he pricked a good many bubbles with the point of his pen. In some cases the reply was so much better than the original letter that it brought the help, about which at first he had been doubtful.

He always liked to dispense his gifts in his own way. Nothing ruffled him more than to be told that he was expected to give this or that for some

philanthropic scheme. He used to say, "I have always held my money as a trust, for which I must give an account, and I will allow no man to tell me what I am to do with it. That is a matter for my conscience in the sight of God." This sense of stewardship controlled his whole life. "Many a man," said Phillips Brooks, "has a dim notion of stewardship about his property, but very few have it about their knowledge." "One grows tired," added that great preacher, "of seeing cultivated people, with all their culture, cursed by selfishness." Richard Tangye held his knowledge, as well as his wealth, as a trust; the sense of moral responsibility dominated him in every direction. It led him to undertake all sorts of irksome tasks, sometimes for the community, but more often in the quiet walks of private life.

One of his intimate friends states how frequently the words, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," were on his lips, and adds that nearly always they were followed with, "And do it quickly." If he saw an opportunity, he seized it there and then, and it was characteristic of him to tell nobody anything about his adventures of faith and goodwill. Occasionally, this reserve broke down. One day, towards the close of his life, when it was plain that there could be but one end to the malady from which he was suffering, he turned to a companion, with whom he was pacing up and down his garden at Combe Bank, and said abruptly, "How many pensioners

do you think, my friend, I have ? ” His visitor did not hazard a guess. “ There are twenty of them. ” He went on to explain he had just been compounding with his “ creditors. ” He felt that his days were numbered, and, as these annual payments would close with his death, he had paid them all a lump sum,—a stiff order, he hinted, with a merry smile. “ That little woman, ” he said on another occasion, “ tells me that she can earn her living for some time yet, so I have made her independent at the age of forty. ” The lady in question had no actual claim upon him, but had won his respect, and so he sent his imagination down the coming years of a useful life, and resolved that a self-denying career should not end in poverty.

CHAPTER XVII

"TWILIGHT AND EVENING BELL"

Growing old gracefully—At Kingston Vale—"Keep the flag of honour flying"—Lifelong service to others—"Keeping his friendships in repair"—Knighthood—Peaceful days at Glendorgal—Illness—Letter from William Tallack—"Cornish apprentices" at Sidcot—"A trail of sunshine"—A mind broad and generous—Last days and death—Tribute of Dr. Guinness Rogers—The high breeding of the spiritual life—A bit of English oak.

Few men ever conquered more perfectly the art of growing old gracefully than Richard Tangye. Shrewd and practical though he was and punctilious in all affairs of business, he possessed the romantic temperament, and that, together with his keen sense of humour and his lively sympathy with other people helped to keep him young. He said that his sixtieth birthday was the happiest in his life, for he spent it with a group of merry children, turning himself into a horse on their behalf and romping round his own drawing-room with them on his back. He was himself, in truth, as young in spirit as any of them, and to the end of his days he kept the child-heart. This was the more remarkable since he had his full share of illness, and on more

than one occasion had to endure long periods of suffering in nursing homes recovering from the surgeon's knife.

Like all sensitive, highly-strung men, he had his moods of great depression, but he refrained from querulous complaints, judging it best to be still till the evil spirit left him. The way to rouse him was to tell him of somebody else's troubles ; at once his kindly nature would assert itself, and he would grow oblivious of his own. He held with the saintly Jeremy Taylor that the two feet of the Christian are faith and patience, and, when clouds and darkness were about him, like a right valiant man he went straight forward in full persuasion that the sun would soon scatter the mists.

There is no need to dwell at any length on the closing years of a happy and honourable career.

He left Birmingham in the year 1894 and settled first at Gilbertstone, Kingston Vale, and then at his final London home, Combe Ridge and Combe Bank, in the same beautiful locality. These two houses were his winter quarters, but when summer made its magic appeal, he always went to what one of his friends playfully called his "Earthly Paradise," his romantic rock-bound, wave-swept retreat Glendorgal, with its glorious views of the heaving Atlantic.

He still travelled more or less frequently to Birmingham, for he kept in close touch with the Cornwall Works to the last. He went much further afield at times, making his last long journey across the

ocean as late as 1904, when he went to New Zealand to visit his married daughter, Mrs. Chambers, an expedition from which he returned rich in happy memories, and with little thought at the time that the end was so near.

Like all sensible men who do not possess a cast-iron constitution, Richard Tangye, when mid-way between sixty and seventy, recognised the necessity of taking in sail. His sons had grown up, and two of them, Lincoln and Wilfrid, were taking their full share of responsibility under his younger brother, Mr. George Tangye, and his two sons, William and Harry, in the control of the great business in Birmingham. Another son of Richard Tangye's, Gilbert, was already established in practice, at the Bar, and his other remaining daughter was happily married. Here, perhaps, it ought to be stated that the Board of Directors at the Cornwall Works now consist of Mr. George Tangye, who is Chairman, his son William, and his nephew Lincoln, who are Deputy-Chairmen; Mr. G. H. Haswell, who is Managing Director, and Messrs. Tindall, Price, and Johnson.

He kept his keen interest in politics, as many a pithy, incisive letter to the press bore witness, but when, first, John Bright, and then Gladstone passed away, his activities slackened, except in regard to international peace and the imperilled interests of Free Trade. The old order was changing, and with some of the developments of modern political life, even within the Liberal Party, he had little

sympathy, for he was a Radical of the old-fashioned school, too intent on moral considerations to accept the shifting creed of compromise. In the far-off days of Queen Anne, people used to describe a certain set of politicians as trimmers; their descendants still survive in public life, but he was not of their number.

One of the watch-words of Sidcot School, where he was trained, was "Keep the flag of honour flying," and Richard Tangye nailed it to his mast. He held that wealth may be material, intellectual, and moral, but whether it lies in the hand, the head, or the heart,—a man is responsible for it, and can only possess it with advantage to himself so long as he holds it as a trust to be used for the common good. No question of a kind heart alone explains Richard Tangye's lifelong devotion to the service of others. He was under the yoke of the Master of men. Deep at the heart of him was a noble reticence—the silence of a loyal nature fearful to offend, which recoiled from speech, because chilled by the easy emotional talk of some, whose feet were slack in the pursuit of the ideals which they loudly extolled. Shy, self-distrustful, not in business assuredly, but in the region where faith is supreme, he yet held the secret which compels self-revelation in other men. It was the instinctive feeling which he created that he was a man to be trusted, sagacious, tender-hearted, tolerant, which turned him into the confidant of people of all sorts, who never dreamed, when they first met him, that they would

tell him so much. He held many secrets, and he kept them ; when they were disquieting, his loyalty was always equal to the strain.

There is no need to dwell on the incidents which marked his closing years,—years which were full of sweetness and light. He wisely threw the cares of the great business, which he helped to a remarkable extent to build up, on younger and more vigorous shoulders. But the keen sense of duty which dominated his whole life remained unrelaxed, and he stood behind those on whom the chief burdens were falling, like a tower of strength.

His old comrades in business, in politics, in philanthropy, were falling fast, but he sunned himself in the society of those that remained, and, like a wise man, he followed Sydney Smith's advice and kept his friendships in repair, and with characteristic gaiety of spirit took short views.

Honours came to him of one sort and another which revealed the respect in which he was held. He was a magistrate of Birmingham, of Warwickshire, and of Cornwall, and the president or treasurer of several philanthropic societies. Lord Rosebery, on May 21, 1894, to Richard Tangye's great surprise, wrote him a letter, stating that as Prime Minister, he had submitted his name to the Queen for the honour of knighthood, and that her Majesty had expressed her approval of that recommendation. The reasons which Lord Rosebery gave for such a mark of honour were to him peculiarly gratifying—"Many public services and steadfast political

faith." All the same he hesitated about the acceptance of the knighthood. He carried the letter in his pocket for a fortnight, and the determination grew strong within him to decline, in the most graceful terms he could command, the proffered distinction. But the workpeople at Birmingham got wind of it, and presently the newspapers as well, and so he thought it would be ungracious to decline. He would have preferred on many grounds to have remained plain Richard Tangye to the end of his days, and he used laughingly to say that all that it had brought him was a more vigorous bombardment than ever for subscriptions.

Here, perhaps, the words of a Birmingham journal may be cited. They were written in that uneasy fortnight when he was oppressed by the proposal ; "There is not a man in Birmingham who would either wish or dare to add a note of discord to the chorus of satisfaction and congratulation which has ensued upon the announcement that the public services and benefactions of Richard Tangye have been officially recognised by the offer of a knighthood. It may be news to many that, coincident with the formation of Mr. Gladstone's last administration, an offer of a somewhat similar nature was made and declined. Whether Mr. Tangye, who, as is well known, sets no value upon the meretricious aspect of a title, will in the present instance see his way to the acceptance of an honour, which must generally be considered an inadequate recognition of his almost unique career, is not at present known.

But the decision, we may be sure, would be a right one, and meet with the approval of the people of the city, for which he has made so many sacrifices, and which, to the regret of every inhabitant, he is on the eve of leaving. The Prime Minister could not have made a more touching appeal for the confidence of Birmingham Liberals than he has done in thus making it apparent that occasionally public virtue and public honour stand in the relation of cause and effect." So he became "Sir Richard," and carried his new honour, as every one expected, with easy grace.

Quite as gratifying to him were the private letters he received from people all over the kingdom, who felt that knighthood could scarcely have been more worthily bestowed. Other letters, too, reached him later which touched a deeper note. Let one suffice,—it came from a household which he had shielded ;—"We can never in this world thank you for all your great kindness to us, but perhaps in another we may do something to show how much we appreciate the things that we cannot speak of now without tears in our eyes." It is a great thing to carry, through the crowded thoroughfares of life, a heart responsive, at every turn of the way, to the needs of others.

He was much at Glendorgal in his closing days, for the quietude and beauty of the place, and, not least, its happy and uplifting memories appealed to him. That roomy and picturesque house set in a wild garden, with its glorious views of twenty miles of

the Cornish headlands, with the waves, even in summer, breaking high on a rock-bound coast, was, of all spots on earth, the one where he was most at home. Happily, to the last he was surrounded by his children and grandchildren, and, best of all, ever at his side was the woman he loved.

He kept up his wide correspondence, writing business letters when the necessity arose, but chiefly now concerned, in that Indian summer of his life, in making glad such old friends as still remained to him by kindly remembrances, or in carrying out, with characteristic energy, some new scheme of philanthropy.

He knew quite well, by many a sharp touch of physical pain, that the end was approaching, but that knowledge only seemed to make him more eager to help other people. He had, of course, his times of depression, and then he would walk up and down that winding grass-path in his garden on the top of the cliff, which lies between Glendorgal and the little Cabin, as he called it, which he had built for himself on a jutting ledge of rock, where he could watch the breakers at his feet. In the hush of the summer twilight, when the stars were coming out, it was his custom to pace up and down repeating to himself, whenever the sense of the limitations of life became oppressive, some favourite passage from Tennyson's majestic "In Memoriam,"—a poem which brought to him, as it has brought to thousands of other men, not only consolation but courage.

Nothing pleased him better than to watch the

happy groups of children playing below on the sands of Newquay or Porth in the long summer days when the tide was out. Sometimes strangers would climb up the rocks at low tide and invade the privacy of his grounds, but he was reluctant, as he said, to warn them off the turf, for, as a poor little lad, he had scrambled up those very rocks in the same way, and he never forgot how kindly his trespass was forgiven by the man in possession at that time. All sorts of people still came to see the Cromwell Collection, and to those who evinced any real interest in the books, the pictures, the medals and the personal relics of the Protector he gave a welcome which made a visit to Glendorgal a red-letter day in their life. In witty, picturesque talk he would describe his treasures in such a vivid manner that those who listened to him almost felt as if they had suddenly stepped back into the days of the Commonwealth. Moreover, he could point the moral of it all, and, in some swift aside, would trace the manner in which those stern old Puritans had shaped,—to an extent which they themselves at the time but dimly understood,—the destinies of England.

In the early days of January 1906, Sir Richard Tangye's illness grew so acute that he had to submit to a critical surgical operation. He said afterwards, that when he entered the Nursing Home in Nottingham Place, London, he never expected to leave it again, but not even his nearest relatives suspected at the time that he cherished

such a thought. Before he went there he quietly settled all his affairs, and then, with childlike trust, faced the ordeal. The surgeon's knife, though it gave him temporary relief, revealed that his days were numbered. After a few anxious weeks in a darkened room, he regained some measure of strength, and would laugh and talk with his nurses and friends almost as if nothing had happened. Presently he was allowed to go back to his home at Combe Bank, where all that love and skill could do were at his service. He was so kind and considerate a master, and so perfectly winning and natural, that his servants hung about him with wistful devotion. Then, as the summer approached, the old longing for Glendorgal came back upon him. He must see it once more before he died. There was a risk, of course, in such a long journey, but it was safely accomplished, and for two beautiful months of almost unclouded sunshine he dwelt among his own people and watched, from his favourite seat in the garden, the glory of earth and sky and sea.

Then in the early autumn, when the deep blue had vanished from the Atlantic in response to duller skies, he came back to Combe Bank. The closing weeks of September that year in London were flooded with mellow sunshine, which transfigured the rich autumnal tints. He was still thinking of his friends, rather than of himself, and one by one they came, as his strength permitted, to say "Farewell." His old vivacity and humour did not desert him, and as he lay in his chair on the

lawn, talking with a flash of his old vigour, it was difficult to realise that the tide was swiftly ebbing out. Here a characteristic instance of his happy humour in sickness flashes to remembrance. In a former illness he was lying in a critical condition, and his own doctor called in a specialist. They made together a careful examination of the patient, and, thinking he had fallen asleep, retired to a distant corner of the room in consultation. Presently Sir Richard heard the whispered words, "A very difficult case," and looking up from the bed, with a sudden twinkle in his eye quietly said, "Never mind the case, gentlemen—what about the works?"

One man who came to see him then, more welcome perhaps than any other, was William Tallack, who only the other day—September 25, 1908—followed him into the Light. Between them lay a friendship of nearly sixty years, which began at Sidcot School, and ran like a river, growing deep and broad as it neared the sea.

The temptation to cite innumerable letters has been resisted in these pages, but one from William Tallack must here find, in part at least, a place. It was written when they were old men and on Christmas Day :—"I suppose as we get older we become more retrospective, and to-day I have been thinking much of the past, partly from the associations inseparable from the day itself. Then also I was looking into a book about Brittany, with its granite coasts and wild moorlands, and this turned my mind afresh to Cornish thoughts. And I

thought of yourself and your brothers, and of the wonderful results of your lonely visit to Birmingham long years ago. The old warriors of Brittany, such as the Du Guesclins and others, and the Dukes both of Brittany and Cornwall, were men whose lives were spent mainly in destructive activities. But your work has been constructive, not merely in the mechanical and literal sense, but, what is of far more importance, in its results on the family and social life of so many thousand persons. Both Birmingham, the 'great ingenious Town,' and the world are the better for the great firm of which you laid the foundation, and, although my own sphere has been in a much more limited way, yet both of us, 'Cornish apprentices of Sidcot,' have, through Divine Grace, been enabled, I trust, to influence the world for some beneficial purpose. With both of us it is toward evening and the day is far spent. Let us hope that the Good Hand which has followed us may still be graciously extended to help and bless us."

Sir Richard's last letter to William Tallack, written on September 12, 1906, referred in touching terms to their "long unbroken friendship," and expressed the wish to have "some talk concerning the Kingdom, to which we are both rapidly approaching."

Here is William Tallack's own account of his last glimpse of his old friend:—"On a lovely day in September, a few weeks before the end came, I was able to visit him at Combe Bank near Kingston.

He was sitting in the sunshine on the lawn, with Lady Tangye and his son Lincoln and nephew William Tangye. He was very weak, and said, 'After all, I shall pass away before you.' My own life hung at the moment as by a thread. Yet Sir Richard was the first to go. But to the end he was as bright and jocular as ever. His whole life had been a trail of sunshine."

A noble and far-reaching hope lay at the back of Richard Tangye's life :—"We are not responsible for having come into this stage of existence ; and surely this fact will have much greater weight with Infinite Justice than some poor mortals are inclined to give it." He believed in no niggardly plan of salvation.

Early in October there came to this most human and sensitive man the inevitable reaction. He was at this time lying in an upper room, fighting, not merely with physical distress, but with imaginary terrors. He had no dread of the mystic Hereafter ; but he was oppressed with the agony of dissolution. "I am going a long journey, he said, 'but that is all right ; I have packed my bag. What I fear is the last gasp.' But all fear vanished twelve days before he died, and vanished never to return. He was like a little child escaping from a stern schoolmaster, and rejoicing in the thought of home. His noble, expressive face, worn now by suffering, was illuminated as with the sense of triumph, though his words about himself were more lowly than ever. He lay in the peace of God which passeth under-

standing, for, as he said, all burdens had fallen from him, and he was spared the "last gasp," for he passed onwards in his sleep on Sunday, October 14, 1906.

He was mourned with no common grief, and far outside the circle of home, and even that of friendship, for his character had made, all unconsciously, a deep impression on strangers. It would be easy to cite many expressions of sorrow, not formal or conventional, but marked by the ring of sincerity. But there is surely no need to multiply words, and therefore it is scarcely necessary to do more now than print the tribute, written for these pages, of one of his closest personal friends—a man whom he greatly admired and honoured, Dr. Guinness Rogers :—

"It is not often that close friendships are formed in old age. The friendship of a life-time is the ideal which appeals alike to the imagination and the heart. We are all affected, if not dominated, by the memories of our earlier days, and it is evidently not easy to form intimate relations where there are no common and endearing memories. My friendship with Sir Richard Tangye, however, was a very marked exception to this rule. I knew nothing of the earlier days of that striking career which gave him an almost exceptional position in the industry of England. He had organised a great business, and made its success one of the conspicuous facts of the commercial world ; had attained a high reputation in the municipal administration of a great city, and had won a still more distinguished

fame in its philanthropic work long before I had the great pleasure of making his acquaintance. I confess I wonder that it was so. But my visits to Birmingham, if comparatively frequent, were but short. Of course the longest and most frequent were made to my comrade R. W. Dale, a term by which each of us loved to describe himself. Perhaps that very name may help to explain the fact that I saw little even of those with whom my friend was very intimate. We were so occupied with each other that, until the time of Dale's illness, my knowledge of other Birmingham men, even though I was in close sympathy with many of them, was limited.

"As a matter of fact, it was not until 1895 that I was thrown into close contact with one who became my closest and most intimate, most faithful and trusted of friends. The occasion on which I met him was interesting. Mr. and Mrs. Cadbury had, under the promptings of personal kindness and close sympathy in religion and politics, resolved to give a public reception to Dale and myself. The memories of the evening are deeply impressed upon me, for I was then introduced, in an apparently incidental way, to the man who for years after was one of my closest intimates. I was struck both by his appearance and his kindly welcome. A more simple, and unpretending man it would not have been possible to find, and yet there was a certain distinction about him not easy to describe, but which I, at least, from the first found it impossible to ignore. Of his

intellectual vigour, no one conversing with him, even for a few minutes, could doubt. His quiet but forceful observations, or, what was sometimes equally noteworthy, his moments of silence, gave me the impression of one who thought before he spoke, and those conclusions were certainly of no common type. It was only close intercourse which enabled me gradually to realise the extent of his careful reading and the breadth of his intellectual sympathy. I soon learnt to regard him as old men seldom regard those who are advanced in years like themselves. From the beginning of our friendship, our intercourse was constant and close. There was no long record of early experiences in which we had been sharers, and no startling passages in our memory of events which had drawn us close together. We met in what seemed to be a purely accidental manner, and we talked without restraint because each had absolute confidence in the other, and in the greatest questions we were emphatically at one.

“Our visits to each other were frequent, for men each of whom was leading a somewhat busy life. But it was during occasional visits to Glendorgal that I came to know his inner life and thought most intimately. To see him there, amid all the beauties of that Cornish scenery, standing perhaps before the beautiful old house, with two or three dogs round about him, preparing for a long walk along the cliffs, finding enjoyment himself in ministering to the pleasure of his companions at every

point, was itself a call to brightness and joy. Glendorgal was a storehouse of literature and artistic beauty, and everything possible was done to diffuse the air of simplicity and home-comfort all around. Each member of the family seemed to fill his or her own place in ministering to the comfort and happiness of the guests. It would hardly be too much to say that Sir Richard cultivated the art of understanding the spirit and disposition of his friends, so that he might adapt all the surroundings of the home to their different tastes. Hospitality could not well have been at once more unostentatious and yet more perfectly delightful. If people would only recognise it, they might find various Dissenting homes which answer to this description, though possibly few that could in this respect rival that of Sir Richard Tangye. The complete isolation from the world, the magnificence of the scenery around, the air of abandon which characterised the whole surroundings, were themselves very delightful. The impression was fully sustained when, on entering the house, you found yourself in a perfect home of Cromwell curiosities, but even these would have failed to produce the full effect but for the constant care and kindness of the host and hostess.

“Cromwell was, as may be supposed, a very close bond of connection between us. This common admiration was certainly not due to any military instincts in either of us. But we both felt that the cause to which Cromwell rendered such dis-

tinguished service, both by brain and by sword, was one with which we were in passionate sympathy.

“That wonderful Cromwell Room at Glendorgal remains in my memory as one of the chief attractions of that beautiful place. It was clearly not a mere addition to a gentleman’s home, much less an outward and visible sign of the hobby by which his graver hours were relieved. On the contrary, it meant that Cromwell was the centre round which the political and ecclesiastical sympathies of the man gathered. His simple, affectionate nature shone out in deeds of kindness to all with whom he was brought in contact. The purity of his religion was made conspicuous by his unassuming bearing and gracious consideration. His religion was not a matter of creeds or churches, but of life. It entered into all his relations and activities. It would be hard to find a man more anxious to ‘do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.’”

Richard Tangye, though brought up in the Society of Friends, and always in sympathetic association with its philanthropic activities, was not a member of that community. He attended the ministry of Dr. R. W. Dale in Birmingham, and that of Dr. Guinness Rogers in London, and was therefore closely associated with Congregationalism. He himself sat lightly to such distinctions, and, though he was ever in revolt against ecclesiastical authority, he possessed that habitual reverence which has been rightly termed the high breeding of the spiritual life.

In some lives harmony comes only at the last. They are like sweet bells jangled out of tune through all the heat and burden of the day. But in his life it was otherwise, the bells were not jangled but only grew more mellow, and their music still lives in the hearts of all who knew him.

As for the rest, surely it may be claimed that Richard Tangye was a fine bit of English oak, deep rooted, sound to the core, far-spreading—alive with strength and beauty, like a tree which long had wrestled with the storms of life, and, wrestling, had prevailed.

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